

“Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised.”

Luke 24:5

Easter Week: April 4-10, 2010

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Easter Week

Easter Sunday, we read from the **Acts of the Apostles** to hear Peter's preaching about the Resurrection. The **Letter to the Colossians** reminds us "You have died and your lives are hidden with Christ in God." The gospel is from **John's Gospel** and gives us the first story of that Easter morning - Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and runs to Peter and the "disciple Jesus loved" to tell them. They run to the tomb and discover for themselves that it is empty.

The first reading for Easter Week is from the **Acts of the Apostles**. We hear Peter's preaching the Good News and experience the first deeds of the Apostles, which parallel the acts of Jesus, including the conflicts he experienced and his power to heal.

The gospels this week are all resurrection appearances. These wonderful stories contain some common elements. They appear designed to make it clear that this was not a group of disciples who dreamed up the resurrection, because they were hoping for it so much. In fact, they found it difficult to believe. The Jesus they saw and experienced was not a "ghost." Instead, he had a body.

Monday, is the story of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, as well as the "cover-up story" and pay off of the guards. Tuesday, we read of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, through the eyes of **John's Gospel**. Jesus missions her to announce the Good News to his brothers. On Wednesday we are treated to **Luke's** marvelous story of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were sad, because they had hoped the story

Daily Prayer This Week

We now begin a celebration of the **Resurrection of our Lord** for the next seven weeks - when we mark the **Ascension** forty days after Easter and culminating in the celebration of **Pentecost** on the fiftieth day after Easter. This week, we begin that deepening realization of, and reflection upon, the meaning of the gift of life we have received in God's raising Jesus from the dead so that we might have eternal life.

Just as it difficult for many of our cultures to face the reality of death, it is difficult to accept the reality of life after death. St. Paul invites us to live in this passing world with our hearts set on the world that will never end. This week let us try to open our hearts to a felt sense of what a difference it makes that the tomb is empty, that Jesus is alive, that he allows us to recognize him in the breaking of bread, and that he missions us to proclaim this Good News.

Each morning this week, we can pause for a moment and simply thank God for our being alive today. Even more, we can thank God for the life that Jesus won for us.

Throughout the day, and at different brief moments, we can remember that this is Easter Week and ask to live more freely today, more gratefully. We can name the grace in our own terms and in the context of what we are experiencing, what gets us discouraged or what gives us life. Overall, we want to live the freedom we have been given. If death has no hold on us, so many of our fears would melt away. If we realized our ultimate home is in heaven, our spirits would be lighter and we would walk around more gratefully.

would have turned out differently. Jesus tells them why he had to first suffer and die in order to enter into his glory. As they stopped to eat, "he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." Thursday Jesus appears in the room where the disciples are gathered. "Peace be with you" he says and then eats with them and shows them his wounds. On Friday, we have the powerful appearance in **John's Gospel** at the Sea of Tiberias. Peter decided to return to fishing. Jesus appears and re-missions him. On Saturday, the week concludes with the summary of appearances in what appears to be an addition to the end of **Mark's Gospel**.

On the **Second Sunday of Easter** we get a picture of how the early community gathered around as "Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles." **John's Gospel** gives us two post-resurrection stories that feature Thomas, the doubting apostle. "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

So, as we go through this week, we can let ourselves believe in the Resurrection that was won for us. "Lord, I believe in the gift of life you have given me in the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus." We can say this act of faith, or sing any of the wonderful Easter songs in the back of our minds, as many times as it takes to let ourselves feel the effects of Easter.

Perhaps we had a difficult Holy Week or Easter. There might have been loneliness or family conflicts. Perhaps we are facing a chronic illness or deep struggles with a loved one, or we are grieving the loss of a loved one. These, and many other struggles can challenge our Easter hope and joy. This is the week to place our trust in the one who is now alive, so that we can live forever. We can ask for the gifts of hope renewal these days. In giving thanks, we can ask that our hearts be opened even more to receive the gift of his Spirit.

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