

The Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord with the Rite of Holy
Baptism for Kyler and Joseph Mallon

31 March, Anno Domini 2024

St. Mark 16:1-8

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Children of the resurrection,

In St. Luke's account of the resurrection, the angel asked the
women "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" This was
probably an absurd question in the mind of the women. "He was
crucified. He was dead. We saw it all happen with our own eyes.
Where else would we look for the body of Jesus than in the
grave where we saw Joseph and Nicodemus lay Him?"

But the grave is not where Jesus told them that He would be.
How could He be in the grave? The sacrifice is complete. The

women's sins, your sins, Adam and Eve's sins, my sins - all of them have been paid for in full. The fearsome teeth of Death have been broken out because it tried to consume Jesus. But it had nothing against Him. His Blood wasn't shed for Himself. It was shed for us. And it was enough. It was infinitely more than enough. Death no longer has any authority or power. Jesus does. And because of the infinite value of Christ's sacrifice, there is nothing left to hold Jesus in death, nor any who are joined to Him. No sin, no amount of guilt, was left unpaid and so the grave had to yield Him up. It will yield us up as well because we are in Him, because our hope and trust are in Him.

The women had been talking among themselves trying to figure out how in the world they were going to get into the tomb since the stone that had been rolled in front of it was exceedingly large, not to mention the guards that had been stationed there. But when they arrived their question had already been answered, though they didn't yet understand it - Jesus rolled the stone away. Jesus opened all tombs. On the Last Day, when He returns to judge the living and the dead, He will call forth ALL who have died and EVERY tomb will give up those who lie in them.

All will rise. Jesus will raise you and all the dead and give to you and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is what Easter means and promises

Of course you are not going to find Jesus among the dead. He is the God of the living - of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. His very name tells you this - I AM. And as the Living God, He is the one who gives life. He is not satisfied to simply accomplish your salvation and then hope that you somehow obtain what He has done. He knows that would never happen. He knows that left to our own devices we would simply plod along in sin until we perish in eternal judgment. He knows that we would simply remain among the dead.

He wants this salvation, this promise, to be known and believed by every man, woman, and child. But how could the promise of life through the forgiveness of sins be believed if it is not heard? It must be proclaimed. The dead do not raise themselves. Christ must call us out of death and restore us to life with His life-giving Word.

And so in His abundant mercy Christ has established His Church to proclaim to the whole world the glorious news of the peace of His cross and the resurrection to eternal life. He has sent messengers to you to call you forth from the grave of sin and unbelief and to bestow upon you His own indestructible life as they absolve you in His Name, as they admonish you in His Word, and as they feed you with His Body and Blood. This very day among us, the power of Christ's resurrection is at work. Kyler and Joseph, once trapped in the death of their sin, have been raised to new life in the waters of Holy Baptism. At one and the same time they died with Christ and were raised with Him. Their sins are washed away, drowned in the font. They have been born again through Holy Mother Church through the washing of water with the Word. God has adopted them as His own dear sons and given them His Name and promised them the inheritance of His Kingdom. They are members of the Holy Family of God. We rejoice to call them brothers. Death has given way to life once again! This is truly a day of resurrection!

So why then do we still seek the living among the dead? Why do we still today imagine that we will find Jesus among the dead

things of this world? Why do we imagine that the peace and comfort and help and salvation of the Living God will be found in the things of this dead and dying world?

Children of God, you simply will not find life or salvation anywhere but with Christ. And you will not find Christ anywhere but where He promises to be - where two or three are gathered together in His Name. To be gathered together in His Name is to be gathered around the means of grace, the means of salvation, the means by which we are resurrected again and again as we remain embroiled in this battle against our flesh and the world and the devil. Christ has gone before you. Not to Galilee, but here to His house where you hear His voice in the Holy Scriptures and where you will feast on the victory banquet of the Body and Blood of the Paschal Lamb. Here you see Him just as He told you.

Do not look for Him in the world. You will not find Him. You will not find Him in success. You will not find Him in popularity. You will not find him in a healthy body. You will not find Him in entertainment. You will not find Him in political

parties. These are the things of the dead, the very things from which you have been set free. The dead put their hope in these things. The dead seek to find joy, peace, and life in these things. You are not the dead. Why then should YOU be found among the dead and their things?

Let the dead have the things of the dead. “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.” Put away malice and evil. Put away anger and lust. Put away doubt and covetousness. Put away worry and fear.

You are the living ones because you have been given the life of the Living One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on truth, compassion, piety, hope, joy, faithfulness, charity, modesty, and love. These are the gifts given to all who put on Christ. In Him you are a new creation. The bright light of Easter shines into the darkness of this world as God’s children live in the hope and certainty of the resurrection, the certainty that one day, you will look upon your gracious Savior, your King, face to face. One day you will not be surrounded with the things of death that now weigh down your hearts. Do not be deceived. Do not let what you now see

and feel and experience take your eyes away from Christ and the life and victory you have in Him. Your sufferings, your trials, and your crosses will have their end. It is not the cross that is eternal. It is the empty tomb. It is the risen Christ. Your sorrows will end. So what are they? They are only passing shadows that will one day give way to the eternally brilliant day of Christ' perfect presence.

The stone is rolled away and the living Jesus, who was crucified is risen. Death is conquered. Sin is paid for. Christ Jesus is among the living, those who have been granted the new life of Holy Baptism, His beloved Church. Here you will find Him just as He told you and He will fill you with the joy of salvation.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

In the Name of +Jesus.

Pastor Ulmer

(We stand.) The peace of God which passes all understanding

keep you hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.