

Season of EASTER



Prayers

Collect of the Day

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Psalm 4 (antiphon v. 7)

Acts 3:11-21

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36-49

Hymns

Hymn of the Day – 483

Other Hymns – 479 (FR, G), 459

(G), 464 (G), 465, 482

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, with joy the Church continues to celebrate the resurrection victory of Your beloved Son. Look in Your mercy on all who have been baptised into His death and resurrection, and grant them grace each day to die to sin and rise to newness of life with Him. Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Eternal Father in heaven, as Your Son, our risen Lord, did open the minds of the disciples so that they might understand the Scriptures, so by Your Spirit open our minds that we would hear more frequently, learn more deeply, meditate more devoutly, and believe more firmly the testimony of the apostles and the prophets in Your Word concerning Your Son who was crucified and risen for us and for our eternal salvation; Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Fountain of mercy, You call Your people to love and serve those in need. Pour out Your blessing on all the mercy ministries of Christ's Church, that many may come to know and praise Your unspeakable kindness and love. Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

King of kings and Lord of lords, to You we commend our public servants in this land. Bless and prosper them in their callings. Hinder everything in our common life that is contrary to Your will, and establish and strengthen every good endeavour. Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Lord of kindness and compassion, Your Son throughout His ministry healed the sick and relieved the distressed. Remember in tenderness those who are in need of His healing and comfort today [especially _____]. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, grant them grace to entrust themselves entirely to Your loving care. Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Giver of the life that never ends, receive today our heartfelt thanks for all Your servants who have departed this life in saving faith and who live in You forevermore. In Your boundless love, bring us with them to share in the joys of the new heavens and the new earth. Lord, in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**



EASTER SERMON

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

(Series B)

APRIL 14, 2024

Sermon Text: Luke 24:36-49

“Meal—Message—Mission”

“They thought they had seen a ghost!”

News that Jesus had returned from the dead was reported to the disciples by two men who had met Him at a village called Emmaus. Then suddenly, Jesus was standing right there. They jumped. Scared. How was Jesus here? Their thoughts were of death.

And yes, death occupies our thoughts as well. Nothing frightens us quite like the realisation that our life here will end one day. As it was for the disciples, our fear of death comes from sin . . . as if death were the end. Without Christ, there is only fear in death – fear of judgement and hell.

But, the Lord Jesus is not a spirit, a ghost, an apparition. No, He is alive! He speaks to our hearts, calming the stormy seas of doubt and fear with His living presence. “See My hands and My feet,” Jesus says to His troubled followers. And through their eyes, we see Him risen. “Touch Me and see.” invites the risen Lord. And with and by their hands, we discover that Jesus is not a body-less phantom. The disciples touch and feel His flesh and bones – the same body that Jesus had before He died on the cross . . . a human body of skin and muscle, of sinew and bone . . . only now, wondrously transformed to live forever. With joyful amazement, their hands take hold of the flesh that was pierced by nails for our transgressions. With wonder and awe, they embrace the One whose bones were suspended from the cross to save the world. He was dead. But now He lives!

Further interaction fills us with wonder. “Have you anything to eat?” the Lord asks the disciples. Not that He’s hungry. No. Jesus hungers for the disciples to know that He has risen. How precious and honoured was that piece of broiled fish that Christ consumed before their eyes! The mighty Lord who had multiplied bread and fish to feed the thousands now presides over the joyous, heavenly banquet—the unending feast of heaven.

Before awestruck disciples, wide-eyed with wonder, Jesus not only appeared, and ate this tiny morsel of fish; but He also taught them. 'Do not be entirely surprised by My resurrection. The Bible said it would happen,' He says to them . . . and to us today. Yes, Sacred Scripture clearly teaches a message of Law . . . the Ten Commandments rightly accuse us as sinners in need of a Saviour. By our own efforts, we cannot earn forgiveness for our sins, save ourselves, nor reverse death's terrible and final sentence. That's why God the Father promised to send His Son – to undo sin's curse upon the entire world. And how? Just this: "The Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead." In fact, the whole Bible points to Jesus. Scripture's main message is not morality. Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms are all about Jesus. These sacred writings were also fulfilled by Him. And Jesus now stands alive before the disciples to teach them and us this truth.

And then, He sends them out . . . gives them a mission – the word "mission" being derived from the Latin word mission which means "sent." God the Father sent His Son into the world to save us. And now, Jesus sending the disciples to all nations to preach salvation in Jesus alone – "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name." These witnesses of His resurrection would have the honour to tell future generations, making disciples of the living Jesus by baptising and teaching in all the world.

And we, who listen with believing ears and hearts are among those who have been brought into fellowship with the living Jesus through His mission. Were these disciples superheroes in this great work of carrying out Christ's mission in the world? Not hardly. Not on their own. They were simple, ordinary men – fishermen, farmers and tax-collectors. But the living Jesus gave them this all-important gift – the Holy Spirit. His was a gift they could wear like armour, as St. Paul puts it in Ephesians. And cloaked with the Holy Spirit's presence and power, these men faced danger, rejection . . . even giving their lives as witnesses for Christ. Yet, with joy and amazement, the apostles of the risen Lord Jesus fulfilled their mission, proclaiming His saving message and eagerly awaited the unending feast of heaven.

And do you know what? In these uncertain times, nearly 2,000 years after that first Easter evening, the risen Lord Jesus is also with us. He eats with us in His sacramental meal. He speaks His unchanging word of forgiveness through the Word proclaimed by the successors of the disciples – pastors. And through which He is leading us to Himself in heaven. Yes, indeed, Christ is risen . . . and so, He is and will be with us always. Amen.