

Dear Friends in Christ,

Easter is our Great Holy Day and the Resurrection is the basis of our faith.

Here are the Readings

EASTER DAY Year A

Acts 10:34-43 Been here, done this recently.

Jeremiah 31:1-6

The "weeping prophet sees it coming and eventually witnesses the fall of Judah to Babylon, the apparent total extinction of the Children of Israel. Ephraim was a tribe and a region in southern Israel (the northern kingdom). Zion is the hill in Jerusalem which was the first fortified by David.

At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

Thus says the LORD:

The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built,

O virgin Israel!

Again you shall take your tambourines, and go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.

Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit.

For there shall be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim:

"Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God."

1. How does view the Children of Israel? _____

2. What is going to happen to all the families of Israel? _____

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

1. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; * his mercy endures for ever.

2. Let Israel now proclaim, * "His mercy endures for ever."

14. The LORD is my strength and my song, * and he has become my salvation.

15. There is a sound of exultation and victory * in the tents of the righteous:

16. "The right hand of the LORD has triumphed! * the right hand of the LORD is exalted!

the right hand of the LORD has triumphed!"

17. I shall not die, but live, * and declare the works of the LORD.

18. The LORD has punished me sorely, * but he did not hand me over to death.

19. Open for me the gates of righteousness; * I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the LORD.

20. "This is the gate of the LORD; * he who is righteous may enter."

21. I will give thanks to you, for you answered me
* and have become my salvation.

23. This is the LORD'S doing, *
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

22. The same stone which the builders rejected *
has become the chief cornerstone.

24. On this day the LORD has acted; *
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

1. Verses 22 & 23 are commonly quoted in the Christian Scripture. What does it mean to you?

Colossians 3:1-4

Paul's letter to the folk in the "Nowheresville" of Colossae was to counter erroneous speculation.

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

1. What is Paul saying? _____

I combined several gospel versions of the end Jesus and beginning Christianity in a dialog called Resurrection. It is an attachment to the e-mail.

John 20:1-18

or

Matthew 28:1-10

RESURRECTION

Scene 1 –

Narrator **Joseph of Aramathia with two of his servants meet Nicodemus on the street outside the residence of Pontius Pilate.**

Joseph I'm glad to see you Nicodemus, but you look exhausted. What are you carrying?

Nicodemus Burial spices. I brought as much as I could carry.

Joseph Give them to my servant Samuel.

Narrator **Joseph turns to the door and speaks authoritatively to a servant.**

Joseph Tell his Excellency that Joseph of Aramathia member of the Sanhedrin would like a brief word with him.

(to Nicodemus)

Damn the Sanhedrin for that secret trial! Neither you nor I nor Gamaliel nor any member with any compassion were called. Just the scared, the greedy and Caiaphas' sycophants.

Pontius Pilate (Irritated) Yes, what do you want? I've already given the orders to have the bodies removed for the sake of your Sabbath.

Joseph Your Excellency, I wish to claim the body of Jesus of Nazareth.

Pilate (Less irritated) Yes, yes. Take it. That carpenter has caused my household more strife than any other execution. The sooner I get him out of my life, the better.

Joseph Thank you your Excellency. I have taken the liberty of writing a note to that effect. If you would be so gracious as to seal the order with your ring, it will help us avoid any misunderstandings.

Rubin, bring the candle and sealing wax.

Pilate You'd better hurry, they are going to dump the bodies in Gehenna.

Joseph (Stated as to a personal equal but of higher rank.)

Thank you again your Excellency. Your graciousness is most appreciated.

Come Nicodemus, Samuel, Rubin, we must hurry.

Scene 2

Narrator **Joseph, Nicodemus and the servants approach Golgotha. Besides the soldiers doing their work, A young man and two middle aged women are standing off to the side.**

Nicodemus We are in time. They have just lowered the crosses but haven't removed the bodies.

Joseph (To the non-commissioned officer in charge.)
We have a letter from his Excellency Pontius Pilate to retrieve the body of Jesus of Nazareth.
What were your orders on how to dispose of the bodies?

Non-com No specific orders, we were just going to dump them in Gehenna with the rest of the city trash as we usually do when the bodies are not left on the crosses to be picked over by carrion crows.

Joseph What would it be worth to you to bury the two thieves out side the city?

Non-com (Thinks for a minute) 15 denarii.

Joseph 10 now and 10 when you finish the job. My servant Rubin will go with you to make sure it is done correctly.

Non-com I don't understand why you are bothering but it's you money.

Do you need help getting the body off the cross? I've done this before and

Nicodemus (Interrupting)
No! You Romans have done enough to our friend and brother!

Joseph (With a hand on Nicodemus' shoulder.)
Thank you for your offer but we would rather do it our selves.

Nicodemus Let me put my cloak over him. I can't stand to see him naked.

Oh Joseph! Did you bring water and a cloth to wash his body? It is so abused

Joseph, I think I'm going to throw up.

Joseph (Gently)
No Nicodemus. There isn't time. We have to get him off the cross and into my tomb before sunset.

Nicodemus Damn the time!! Can we not do at least this one last thing for him and do it well?
What difference does it really make if we do this for a few hours into the Sabbath?
Remember when Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath?"

Joseph (Gently but firmly)
My young friend, you know that, I know that, they do not know that.
You know Jesus was the Messiah, I know he was the Messiah, they do not know.
You know Jesus had the most intimate connection with Yahweh of anyone in our history. I know that. They do not know that.

We are members of the Great Sanhedrin. If we are to exonerate Jesus, protect his followers and promote his message we must be above the slightest reproach. All our actions must be supported by The Law.

Non-com Do you want to use a mallet to loosen the nails?

Nicodemus (Almost in tears.)
I told you You can take your mallet and

Joseph (Interrupting)
Thank you, no. These stones will do just fine.

Narrator Joseph and Nicodemus work on loosening the nails.

Nicodemus Oh God, I hate these nails. I wish I could grind them into powder and make the Romans eat them. I wish I could hang them around Caiaphas' neck for all eternity.

Joseph Saving them to show what evil things people are capable of might be worthwhile.

Narrator Mary, Jesus' mother Mary Magdalene and the disciple John approach the men.

Joseph Oh, here are John and Mary

I'm sorry I didn't notice you sooner.

Mary, My Heartfelt sympathy. If there is anything I can do, please do not hesitate to ask.

Right now, we need you to help us. I do have a linen shroud and Nicodemus did bring burial spices for Jesus body and I am sorry we can't do more but the sun is not long from setting and we must get Jesus into my tomb before the Sabbath begins.

Narrator They wrap the body and place it on a crude stretcher and carry it off

Scene 3

Narrator **The men are followed to Joseph of Arimathea's tomb by a small contingent of Temple Guards.**

Joseph (To one of the Temple Guards)
Why have you followed us? We have done nothing wrong.

Soldier We have orders to guard the tomb to make sure no one steals the body.

Joseph (Incredulously) Who would do that?

Soldier We have our orders. We will not interfere with you as long as the body stays here in the tomb.

Joseph Nicodemus, John , Time is short let us get the body in the tomb and laid out.

Nicodemus, I am sorry but we do not have time to fully anoint the body. Give the burial spices to Jesus Mother and Mary Magdalene. They can finish the anointing on the first day of the week. We must get back to the city, the sun is nearly to the horizon.

Nicodemus How can we move the stone? There are four of us but the stone is huge.

Joseph (to the soldiers)
Can you help us?

Soldier Sure. That is a 5 – 6 man stone and it will just make our job easier to have it in place.

Narrator **All the men put their muscle to the task of rolling the huge stone into place sealing the tomb entrance.**

Joseph (To all present.)
We have done all that is proper and lawful under the circumstances. Let us go home and pray for the soul of our dead friend that it may now rest in the bosom of Yahweh our God.

All Amen.

Scene 4

Narrator **Three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Salome approaching Joseph of Arimathia's Tomb at the first light of morning on the first day of the week.**

Mary Mother of James Did you feel that?

Salome It felt like the ground was shaking under our feet. It is like the time 10 years ago that knocked all those buildings down.

Mary Magdalene It has stopped. I wonder what it means?

Salome Do you think the body will stink? It has been over a day and a half and it has been warm.

Mary Moth. I don't think it will smell too badly and Nicodemus gave us enough burial spices for three bodies.

Mary Mag. Somewhere in the scriptures it said (whispers Yahweh) will not let his Holy One see corruption and we know Jesus was his Holy One.
I wish I knew how we are going to move the stone. I heard one of the guards say it was a 5 – 6 man stone.

Salome Look over there, there is an open tomb. That's not Joseph's tomb is it?
I don't see any guards.

Mary Mag. (Starting to run towards the tomb.)
Oh no! It is. What more can they do to his poor body?

Narrator **Mary runs into the tomb and the others follow and see a young man dressed in white.**

Mary Mag. Who are you? Where is Jesus' body

Salome Lets get out of here.

Mary Moth. She's right! Lets get out of here

Mary Mag. (Screaming)
No! What have you done with him? Where is he? You had no right.....

Young man (With calmness and authority)
Please! Don't be alarmed! I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. Yahweh has raised him up and he is not here. See the place where they laid him. He wants you to tell his disciples and especially Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.

Mary Mag. (Screaming)
What are you talking about? Where is he?

Salome Mary! Lets get out of here!!
(to the mother of James) Mary, help me get her out of here

Narrator **Salome and Mary the mother of James drag Mary Magdalene out of the tomb.**

Mary Mag (Still screaming)
What did you do to him? Where is he?

Young man Please be calm. He is risen.
(Shouting after them)
Remember to tell Peter and the others.

Salome This is weird! No body, burial clothes in place and that guy What did he say? Jesus is risen?

Mary Moth. Lets get out of here. I'm scared

Mary Mag. (Firmly)
Stop! Let go of me. I'm fine.
Who was that young man? He looked familiar.
Do either of you think he was an angel?

Narrator The women start to walk away from the tomb.

Salome Not likely. Angels only appear to one person at a time and usually in dreams. We are all awake and we all saw him. Now lets get out of here.

Mary Moth. He just looked like a young man but even in the dark he did look kind of familiar. But lets get out of here, this is too strange.

Mary Mag. What did he tell us? To tell Peter and the others that Jesus is risen?
Then we have to tell Peter.

Salome Not this woman! You know what they think of a woman's opinion! You tell them this story and they'll think you've lost it.

Mary Moth. Mary, I'll walk you as far as I can and then I'm going home. I'm not about to tell a story that no one will believe.

Mary Mag. Then I'll tell them! They have to know.

Scene 5

Narrator **A dozen or so disciples are milling around talking quietly in the upper room.
Mary enters.**

Mary Mag. Peter, John would you come here please?
You know Salome, James's mother and I went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with the
burial spices Nicodemus gave us.
Well, you're not going to believe this but the stone was rolled away, the guards were gone
and Jesus body was gone. And there

Peter (Interrupting) What!?! The body gone?

Mary Yes! And there was this

John (Interrupting) What?! Are you sure?

Mary Yes I'm sure! And there was this young man there who.....

John (Interrupting) Are you sure you're sure? I laid his body down and helped roll the stone.

Mary (Impatiently) Yes, John! Remember, I watched you.
The stone is rolled away, his body is gone and there was this young man who said that Jesus
.....

Peter (Interrupting) Come on John! We have to see what is going on.

John I'm with you. Lets go.

Narrator **John and Peter run out.**

Mary (Shouts after them.) He said Jesus has risen.

I wish men would listen.

Scene 6

Narrator **The two men run through the empty early morning streets to Joseph of Aramathia's tomb. John, being younger and slimmer, arrives first.**

John (Out of Breath says to himself as he looks into the tomb)
It's just like Mary said, Stone rolled away, guards gone and even though it's dark, the body appears to be gone.

Narrator **Peter comes running up and goes right into the tomb.
John follows Peter and enters the tomb**

Peter Jesus' body is gone! It's not here, it's gone.

John Look at the burial shroud, it is all in place, just the way we folded it around him.
It looks like he just flowed out of it.

Peter Who did it? If I find out who did it, I'll kill'm.
What are they going to do? Abuse his body further? Wasn't killing him enough?

John Peter, something strange is going on! Why would anyone take a body and then refold the shroud exactly as it was when it covered him?

Peter You tell me!! The body is gone so someone must have taken it.

Narrator **Mary Magdalene arrives out of breath.**

Peter It is just as you said Mary, Stone rolled aside, guards gone and Jesus' body gone.

Mary Where is the young man who told me Jesus was risen?

Peter What young man?

John What risen?

Mary If you would just listen. When we arrived, there was a young man in a white robe who told us that Jesus had risen and we were to tell you.

John Do you think he was an angel?

Mary I don't know. We all saw him, we were all awake but he looked kind of familiar.

John I believe you. Peter? We believe everything you have said. It doesn't make sense but what we see here doesn't make sense.

Peter I agree. Only Jesus made sense.
Let's go, we have to tell the others.
Come on Mary.

Mary Go ahead, I want to be alone for awhile.

John That's alright Mary, I know what Jesus meant to you.

Narrator John & Peter leave, Mary falls down on the ground weeping

Mary (To herself)
Why are you weeping? You never wept for anyone before? My Lord, My Jesus is gone and I don't know where he is. He saved my soul from demons and they killed him. He never hurt anyone and they killed him. And now they have stolen his body and I don't know where it is.

Narrator Jesus enters and stands behind her.

Jesus Why are you weeping?

Mary Do you work here? Do you know where they took his body that I may claim it?

Jesus Mary!

Mary My teacher my savior!
(Tries to hug Jesus' feet.)

Jesus (Stepping back) Not now Mary. Now you must go and tell my brethren what you have seen.

Scene 7

Narrator **The upper room. John is talking to the disciples. Everyone is very excited.**

John (Talking to the Disciples) For the forth time, The stone was rolled away, the guards gone, Jesus' body gone but the burial clothes all in place.

Disciple 1 That's weird. Who would do that?

John I know it's weird. Mary Magdalene said that when she and the other women arrived, there was a young man dressed in white saying Jesus had risen. Peter and I believe her.

Disciple 2 Was he an angel?

John I don't know. They were all awake and they all saw him.

Narrator **Mary Magdalene enters**

Mary (Loudly and joyfully) Friends! I have seen the Lord!! Jesus lives!

All What?