

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus

Acts 10:34a,37-43
Ps 118:1-2,16-17,22-23
Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8
John 20:1-9 or Mark 16:1-7
or Luke 24:13-35

Monday April 5

Acts 2:14,22-33
Ps 16:1-2a,5,7-11
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday April 6

Acts 2:36-41
Ps 33:4-5,18-20,22
John 20:11-18

Wednesday April 7

Acts 3:1-10
Ps 105:1-9
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday April 8

Acts 3:11-26
Ps 8:2ab,5-9
Luke 24:35-48

Friday April 9

Acts 4:1-12
Ps 118:1-2,4,22-27a
John 21:1-14

Saturday April 10

Acts 4:13-21
Ps 118:1,14-21
Mark 16:9-15

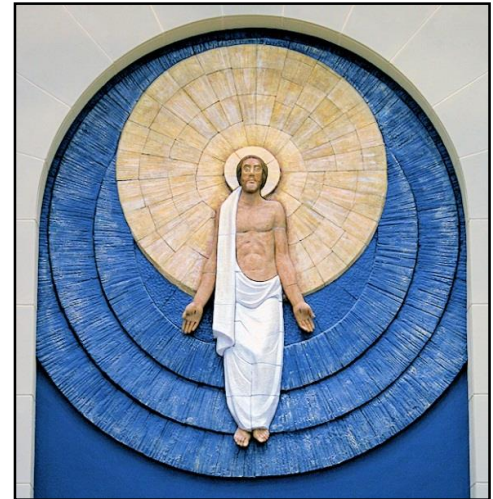
Celebrate! Today is the anniversary of the Great Surprise, and just as the first disciples were surprised to find the tomb empty, so too does God have some resurrection surprises in mind for you!

In the Easter Gospel reading from John 20:1-9, there's a lot of scurrying around and excitement and reporting some amazing news that no one yet understands. Even though Jesus had given them advance notice that he would rise again after being put to death, God's plans took them by surprise. They did not expect a resurrection. They didn't understand that it was a necessary part of the Messiah's mission.

God's plans often take us by surprise. In so many situations of our lives, we don't understand that hard times are going to produce wonderful victories. We fail to realize that the empty

tombs in our lives (the losses we grieve) are beginnings of important new growth. We cannot imagine how Jesus is going to redeem bad times into great blessings.

We suffer through the hardships, just trying to cope, waiting for an opportunity to finally walk away from our crosses. Meanwhile, Jesus wants to give us an Easter morning because of the crosses. How can we recognize the glory of God when we're depressed? How can we realize our resurrections when we're cursing our crosses? It's impossible!



To be the Easter people that we're supposed to be, we have to learn how to see the hope of resurrection in the pain of the cross. We have to trust that Jesus is always there, working a plan to redeem bad into good. We have to allow ourselves to be surprised by God.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What trials are you still enduring? What cross are you still carrying? Are you still being nailed for something you did not do? Which of your desires or dreams are dying?
2. Ask the Father to use your sufferings for the glory of his kingdom. What new life is this creating for you?
3. What are some of the ways in which God has surprised you?
4. How is this an experience of resurrection?