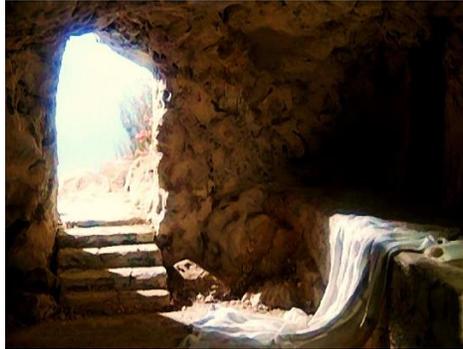


***ctkAlive!* Scripture Study**
Easter Season 2020—A Cycle Readings
Session 1—“He is risen as he said.”



Jesus and the Empty Tomb
by [Afeso Albert Akambi](#)

Note: For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, we have added links to books and authors mentioned. Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter's path. Instinct says, "Leave the reflection and chase after that link!" Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.

Introduction

Opening Prayer (slowly . . . follow the pause marks (/ //).

“An Easter Exultet” by [James Broughton](#)

Leader Shake out your qualms. // Shake up your dreams. // Deepen your roots. //
Extend your branches.

All Trust deep water and head for the open, / even if your vision shipwrecks you. //
Quit your addiction to sneer and complain.

Leader Open a lookout. // Dance on a brink. // Run with your wildfire. // You are closer
to glory leaping an abyss, / than upholstering a rut, / not dawdling, /not doubting.

All Intrepid all the way, / walk toward clarity. // At every crossroad be prepared to bump
into wonder. // Only love prevails.

Leader En route to disaster, / insist on canticles. // Lift your ineffable out of the
mundane. // Nothing perishes; // nothing survives; // everything transforms!

All Amen!!

Overview of the Theme of Easter

The following is from a homily preached at Christ the King parish by [Fr. George Fitzgerald](#) CSP on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2014:

The message of Easter still is, “He Lives,” that Death has died and that evil and wickedness ultimately cannot win. These facts of faith lived then and they live now. Jesus literally squeezed life out of death and goodness and love triumphs. Unlike Humpty Dumpty who could not be put back together again, God put it all back together again and the people shouted, “He Lives, Alleluia!”

The difference is not because some preacher like me gets up and preaches about it. Easter happens at some minimal level, at least, when life is put where there is death, when our hearts understand and when others dislike our absence because they find hope when we are near, and when others are consoled and redeemed by our own lives. Yes, it does make a difference, because some have proclaimed, He is risen; He lives; do not be afraid.

— The late Fr. Fitzgerald assured us that “death has died and evil and wickedness ultimately cannot win.”

How hard is it for me to believe those words, when the lives of millions of people all over the planet seem to be at the mercy of an invisible enemy—the “corona” virus (Covid-19)?

How do I make sense of the current pandemic? Who will “put us back together again when it over?”

Fitzgerald also add: “Unlike Humpty Dumpty who could not be put back together again, God put it all back together again.”

— *Do I foresee any personal and societal good that might follow our imposed “shelter in place”? How may our lives and relationship change in the future—for the better or the worse?*

First Reading: From the Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43

Peter then spoke to [the inquirer Cornelius and his family/community], “Truly, I realize that God does not show partiality, but in all nations he listens to everyone who fears God and does good. And this is the message he has sent to the children of Israel, the good news of peace he has proclaimed, through Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of all. No doubt you have heard of the event that occurred throughout the whole country of the Jews, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism John preached.

“You know how God anointed Jesus, the Nazorean with the Holy Spirit, and power. He went about doing good, and healing all who were under the devil’s power, because God was with him; we are witnesses of all that he did throughout the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem itself. Yet, they put him to death, by hanging him on a wooden cross.

“But God raised him to life on the third day, and let him manifest himself, not to all the people, but to the witnesses that were chosen beforehand by God—to us, who ate and drank with him after his resurrection from death. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to bear witness, that he is the one appointed by God, to judge the living and the dead. All the prophets say of him, that everyone who believes in him has forgiveness of sins, through his name.”

Peter was still speaking when the Holy Spirit came upon all who listened to the word. And the believers of Jewish origin who had come with Peter were amazed, “Why! God gives and pours the Holy Spirit on foreigners also!”

For indeed, this happened: they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter declared, “Can we refuse to baptize with water these people, who have received the Holy Spirit, just as we have?”

Personal Reflection

— *Why were some of the Jewish converts to the Risen Christ surprised to see the Holy Spirit infuse these Gentiles with faith and access to the sacraments?*

— *If I am a convert to Christ (either as a lifelong Christian/Catholic or as an adult), how firm do I now feel in my commitment to the Risen Christ? Do I need to update my knowledge of faith and revive my practice? How willing am I to accomplish that renewal? What will be my first step? The second step?*

Antiphonal Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Response: *This is the day Yahweh has made; so let us rejoice and be glad.*

Alleluia! Give thanks to Yahweh,
for he is good, his loving kindness endures forever.
Let Israel say, “His loving kindness endures forever.”
Joyful shouts of victory are heard in the tents of the just:
“The right hand of Yahweh strikes mightily,
the right hand of Yahweh is lifted high,
the right hand of Yahweh strikes mightily!”
The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.
This was Yahweh’s doing and we marvel at it.

Personal Reflection

— When waking up from a night’s sleep, is my first conscious thought, “Good morning, Lord”? or is it . . . “Good Lord, *morning!*”?
How hard is it for me to wake up each day with the belief and attitude, “This is the day Yahweh has made; so let me rejoice and be glad”? Will I try it . . . tomorrow?

— Find the place in the new Testament where you'll find these words: "The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone."

Second Reading: From the Letter of St. Paul to the Colossians 3:1-4

If you are risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on earthly things. For you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, reveals himself, you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Personal Reflection

— Paul gives us a wonderful image to build our faith on: "When Christ, who is your life, reveals himself, *you also* will be revealed with him in glory."

Spend some quiet time imagining that event (Christ coming again, this time not in a manger but in full glory). Place yourself there at his side, as Paul describes it. Rest a while in that image. Resist saying anything. Just take it all in.

— *What are those "earthly things" in my life that get in the way of my spiritual growth? Am I really powerless to let go of them? If I can't let go of them, how might I do a better job of putting them in their proper place in my life?*

(Alternate second reading: 1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Easter Gospel Proclamation from St. John 20:1-10

On the first day after the [Sabbath](#), Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark, and she saw that the stone blocking the tomb had been moved away.

She ran to Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and she said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they laid him."

Peter then set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and saw the linen cloths lying flat, but he did not enter.

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered the tomb; he, too, saw the linen cloths lying flat. The napkin, which had been around his head, was not lying flat like the other linen cloths but lay rolled up in its place.

Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed.

Scripture clearly said that Jesus must rise from the dead, but they had not yet understood that. The disciples went back to their homes.

Personal Reflection

— Mary Magdalene was the first to discover the open tomb. This dramatic scene of shocking discovery is full of wonder, full of unspoken/unanswerable questions like: “Who moved the body? And where was it now?” Unable to answer her own questions, she ran to tell Peter and John, who then confirmed the emptiness. *What do I think Mary’s, John’s, and Peter’s spoken and unspoken questions were? What would my questions have been?*

— *Why didn’t Mary and the apostles immediately shout out, “He is risen!! Hooray!!” As I place myself at the mouth of the tomb on that early morning, what would my own questions have been? Would I be overjoyed or terrified, or both?*

Journaling Prompts

Take some time to write about the insights you’ve gained from reflecting on the four Easter Sunday readings.

— *What is the first thought that comes to mind?*

— *How do I respond to what I see happening before me?*

Questions (Leader)

Feel free to send any questions you might have to ctkAlive@ctkph.org

Preview of Next Session

2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47 (“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, and to the breaking of the bread and to prayers.”)

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24 (“Let those who fear the Lord say, “His mercy endures forever.”)

1 Peter 1:3-9 (“Although you have not seen him, you live him.”)

John 20:19-31 (“Jesus came and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’”)

Recommended Reading:

[*The Risen Christ*](#) by [Caryl Houselander](#) (Sheed & Ward)

(The resurrection is the key to that indestructible joy which is the special mark of all the saints.)

[*Gateway to the Resurrection: The Stations of the Cross*](#) by Sr. [Joan Chittister](#), OSB
(Short, right to the point reflections on the passion of Christ as they apply to our daily lives.)

For Viewing

[*40—The Temptation of Christ*](#)

(new film directed by Douglas James Vail, with the boy Jesus being played by [Mateo Rey](#). Until very recently Mateo and his parents, Christopher and Sarah Garcia were CTK parishioners. The film was set to be released in theaters this week. Instead it will be available this during this Easter Season on many streaming channels (including Amazon Prime and iTunes). We had a private showing here at CTK last summer. The film is very good. Watch it if you can.)

Closing Prayer

Leader Christ is Risen! Alleluia! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

All Alleluia!!

Leader I do believe / in the victory that awaits me. // Break open the mystery, / so I can 'see' you risen / and allow you / to change my life.

All Risen Jesus, / you give hope, / when everything in life collapses. // In our moments of darkness and despair, / help us to look beyond the present moment / to the resurrection that is ours / when we come to you.

Leader Risen Jesus, / we profess our belief / that you are present in the Eucharist. // May we, / who are nourished by Your body and blood, / nourish others who need your saving love.

All Risen Jesus, / you reveal yourself / in new and wonderful ways. // When we doubt your presence in our lives, / give us courage to hope /and trust you in the darkness.

Leader Risen Jesus, / you come to us / in the ordinary events of life, / like the sharing of a meal. // Help us not to miss these daily opportunities / to recognize your presence / and enjoy your company.

All Christ is Risen! // Alleluia! // He is Risen indeed! // Alleluia!

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Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words
(follow the link)