

First reading Acts 10:34a, 37-43

'We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.'
 In those days: Peter opened his mouth and said: 'You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and caused him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Responsorial Psalm 118(117):1-2,16-17, 22-23. R24

**This is the day the Lord has made;
 let us rejoice in it and be glad.**

Give praise to the Lord, for he is good;
 his mercy endures for ever.
 Let the house of Israel say,
 'His mercy endures for ever.'

The Lord's right hand is exalted.
 The Lord's right hand has done mighty deeds.
 I shall not die, I shall live
 and recount the deeds of the Lord.

The stone that the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.
 By the Lord has this been done,
 a marvel in our eyes.

Second reading Colossians 3:1-4

'Seek the things that are above, where Christ is.'
 Brothers and Sisters: 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 appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Sequence**Victimae Paschali Laudes**

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and
 praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
 and Christ, the undefiled, hath sinners to his Father
 reconciled.

Death with life contended: combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose;

I saw Christ's glory as he rose!
 The angels there attesting; shroud with grave-clothes
 resting.

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into
 Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know.
 Victorious king, thy mercy show!

Gospel Acclamation 1 Corinthians 5: 7b-8b

Alleluia, alleluia. Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed; let us therefore celebrate the festival in the Lord. **Alleluia.**

Gospel John 20:1-9

'He must rise from the dead.'

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going towards the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on the head of Jesus, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Copyright: The readings are from the Jerusalem Bible published by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd 2019

Cycle of Prayer**New Members of the Church****Background**

The Easter Vigil is the usual time to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) with Adults. The Easter Season is therefore the time for post-baptismal catechesis or 'mystagogy' with the newly baptised or 'neophytes'. "This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and in doing works of charity." RCIA 234

Prayer

*Father, you give your Church
 constant growth by adding new members
 to your family.*

*Help us put into action in our lives
 the baptism we have received in faith*

New life, with Jesus

The Easter story begins very early in the morning of the first day of the week while it is still dark. As an old man, John would later write that 'the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining'. But he links this strictly to one condition: 'Whoever loves his brothers and sisters,' John says, 'lives in the light.' On the other hand, 'whoever prefers to hate... is still in the darkness.' (1 Jn 2:8-11).

On Friday, as we remembered the sufferings and death of the most marvellous human being the world has ever known, we came face to face with the dark side of human nature, the darkness that led the enemies of Jesus to torture, humiliate, and finally murder him on a cross. On that black day in Jerusalem, the capacity of human beings to hate, hurt and harm one another went completely out of control. It's no wonder, then, that 'darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon', that 'the sun's light failed', and that 'the curtain of the temple was torn in two' (Lk 23:24).

Between light and darkness, between good and evil, one mighty struggle is still going on. It's going on in the physical cosmos, in human societies, and within our own personalities. Although the darkness often appears to be stronger than the light, it has not yet triumphed. The light is remarkably resilient. Often in danger of being extinguished, it manages to survive, and even to win many victories. The words of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India, still ring as true as when he spoke them seventy years ago: 'When I despair I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but, in the end, they always fall.' The words of the Easter Vigil liturgy express the same truth in an equally appealing way: 'The power of this holy [Easter] night,' it proclaims, 'dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy. It casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly pride.' Our celebration of Easter reminds us that the darkness of evil and hatred will never have the last say. For the resurrection of Jesus proclaims the ultimate triumph of light over darkness and goodness over evil, both in us and in our world.

Jesus was buried at sunset, as darkness was once again creeping over the earth, to all appearances a victim and a failure. But on the third day afterwards the sun came up on him victorious and triumphant, alive, powerful and influential. Once again, 'the true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world' (Jn 1:9)

So we celebrate his resurrection today by rising from darkness and death ourselves. The Risen Lord himself, represented here by this beautiful Easter candle burning in our midst, is asking us to leave behind the works of darkness, to renounce and reject anything and everything in our lives which is dark, sinister and evil, and as persons connected to him by baptism, to 'walk always as children of the light', following in his footsteps.

So we are now invited to renew our baptismal promises. Reject darkness, evil and sin in every shape and form. And promise to follow Jesus Christ from now on, in a life of light, goodness and love, a life shaped by his own powerful example, a life supported and guided by the Holy Spirit, whom he first gave us at baptism and whom he gives us again right now. So together, dear People of God, let us renew our baptismal promises, and renew them as loudly and enthusiastically as we can.