

Sunday Message

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

THE WORD

Year A • 5 April 2026 • Psalter Week 1

SHOUT FOR JOY

JOHN 20:1-9



This is the greatest day in the Christian calendar, the day of our redemption. Jesus, our brother, has broken the chains of death through the power of the Father. Death, the last and greatest enemy, has been overcome.

Through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, life and hope and salvation have replaced death and despair and darkness.

Through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, we are an Easter people, a redeemed people, people alive with joy. God has shown how much God loves us. God is faithful to God's promises. Secure in that love, certain of God's promises, we live as resurrected people, delighting in the good news of our salvation. ■

LEARN

Today, we begin the Season of Easter, which will continue for 50 days until Pentecost. These 50 days are celebrated as one feast, the "Great Sunday". During these days, we celebrate the very basis of our faith – that God raised Jesus from the dead.

SAY

"We are an Easter people and alleluia is our song."

PRAY

Pray for the community of believers throughout the world that they may grow stronger in the faith. Pray especially for all those who are finding it hard to experience the joy of Easter.

DO

When the apostles realised that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they hurried back to tell the others the astonishing news. They became, at that moment, witnesses to the Good News. We too are called to be witnesses to the Good News. How boldly, how joyfully, do you witness to the Gospel?

REFLECT

Every morning I go for a walk. I take the same route and meet more or less the same people. Recently, I carried out an experiment. I decided to smile at everyone I encountered on my walk. Perhaps two-thirds smiled back. Some were distracted or preoccupied, had their eyes down, or were looking at their phones. Still, I persevered. Now almost all cheerfully return my greetings. Smiling, it seems, is contagious.

In 2024, an unusual event took place in the Vatican. Pope Francis met with scores of comedians from throughout the world. He told them their vocation is important, because the world needs humour, it needs joy. One of those present was the American comedienne Whoopi Goldberg, star of the *Sister Act* movies, who is now a panellist on a network talkshow in America called *The View*. Whoopi spoke about the Vatican gathering on *The View* soon after it took place.

She spoke about it again after the death of Pope Francis – about the impact his words made, about how she and the others felt valued and appreciated by a major world leader in a way they never had before, about the warmth and goodness of Pope Francis. No other world leader had ever done as Pope Francis had done – invite comedians to meet him, encourage them, tell them they mattered. It made a tremendous impression on all present. She especially treasured her personal meeting with him.

So, it's no surprise that in his letter *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and be Glad), Pope Francis refers to joy and a sense of humour as one of the signs of holiness. He writes: A sign of holiness is "joy and a sense of humour. Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour. Though completely realistic, they radiate a positive and hopeful spirit. The Christian life is 'joy in the Holy Spirit' (Romans 14:17)."

Pope Francis radiated that joy himself. It was something that baffled some of his old

Argentinian friends who remembered him as a dour fellow with a lugubrious face. They wondered what had happened. How had he transformed into the joy-filled, smiling pope they saw now? And Francis told them about an experience he had immediately after his election as pope when he was praying in the oratory known as the 'room of tears'. He had an extraordinary experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit, a feeling of serenity and joy, and it had never left him, he said. It carried him through each day.

And it informed his entire ministry – his preaching and his writing. One of the striking features of Pope Francis' letters is his liberal use of the word 'joy' – the joy of love, the joy of the Gospel, rejoice and be glad. It was an attitude he emphasised over and over again.

Christians must radiate joy. The Gospel is Good News, the best possible news. Mary's Magnificat is a wonderful prayer of praise and joy. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord," Mary sings, "and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour." The first part of the Magnificat is an exuberant hymn of praise.

Teilhard de Chardin once said that "joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God". We are a joyful people because we know that God is with us. We know we have been saved. Through the death and resurrection of Christ, we know that death has no more power over us.

Knowing we are redeemed, why wouldn't we be full of joy? We must show that joy every day. On this Easter Day above all, we must radiate joy.

Joy means hopeful witnessing, daily Good News transmission, an exuberant delight in God despite everything. We can experience and share joy even in the most challenging of situations. Celebrate the joy of the resurrection today. Let all who encounter you feel your joy. Let them see it. We have every reason to smile. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia.
You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge, alleluia, alleluia.*

Or

*The Lord is truly risen, alleluia.
To him be glory and power
for all the ages of eternity, alleluia, alleluia.*

COLLECT

O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Acts 10:34a, 37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
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.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 118(117):1-2. 16-17. 22-23. R. 24

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

Or **Alleluia.**

1. 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.' **R.**
2. 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. **R.**
3. The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done,
a marvel in our eyes. **R.**

SECOND READING Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.
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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**Alternative reading** 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.
Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**SEQUENCE**

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!

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL 1 Corinthians 5:7b-8a**R: Alleluia, alleluia.**

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

R: Alleluia.**GOSPEL** John 20:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord,
we offer the sacrifice
by which your Church
is wondrously reborn and nourished.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed, alleluia;
therefore let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread
of purity and truth, alleluia, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your Church, O God,
with unfailing love and favour,
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,
she may come to the glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**