

EASTER  
SUNDAY  
YEAR B



CALLED TO BE  
WITNESSES

PRAYER JOURNAL

## OPENING PRAYER

### **Easter Sunday Sequence Victimae Paschali Laudes**

Christians, to the Paschal Victim  
Offer your thankful praises!  
A Lamb the sheep redeems;  
Christ, who only is sinless,  
Reconciles sinners to the Father.  
Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:  
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.  
Speak, Mary, declaring  
What you saw, wayfaring.  
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,  
The glory of Jesus’s Resurrection;  
bright angels attesting,  
The shroud and napkin resting.  
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;  
to Galilee he goes before you.”  
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.  
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!  
Amen. Alleluia.

## READINGS FOR EASTER SUNDAY

### FIRST READING

~Acts 10:34a, 37-43~

**P**eter proceeded to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 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. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

**R/ This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.  
or Alleluia.**

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his mercy endures forever.  
Let the house of Israel say,  
“His mercy endures forever.”

**R/**

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.  
I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the LORD.”

**R/**

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
By the LORD has this been done;  
it is wonderful in our eyes.

**R/**

## SECOND READING

~Colossians 3:1-4~

**B**rothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

OR

## SECOND READING

~1 Corinthians 5:6b-8~

**B**rothers and sisters: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

## GOSPEL

~John 20:19-31~

**O**n the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

# Sunday



## LECTIO DIVINA – SACRED READING OF SCRIPTURE

*Feel free to jot down your notes or reflections on the video in the space below.*

## LECTIO DIVINA – MEDITATION

### SMALL GROUP QUESTION #1

Easter is a day when we are called to remember salvation history and contemplate on our place in this story. We are all a part of this chain of witnesses stretching back to the Apostles. Take a moment to ponder your place in this grand story. **How did you come to be a part of it? Who are the people who have witnessed Christ's Resurrection to you? Which people did God work through to give you the gift of faith? Who are the people to whom he has given faith in his Resurrection through you?**

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**SMALL GROUP QUESTION #2**

When we forget who we are and who God is, we begin to live life differently. We live without hope, and then we have no hope to share with others. For those of us who have heard the Good News, the enemy is constantly trying to make us forget it and go back to a life without God. Our hope is intimately tied to our memory.

**Today, take a moment and remember your story. Who are you? Who is God to you? Take some time to witness to the Resurrection by telling your story. How did you come to know the Lord?**

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## LECTIO DIVINA – PRAYER & RESOLUTION

### PRAYER

Jesus is sharing with his disciples that his hour is coming. He is letting Ponder the Gospel story for today. Put yourself in the place of Peter and John who received the Good News of the Gospel from Mary Magdalene. Think of the fear and loneliness that must have filled their hearts before she came to them. Then think of the hope that must have begun to grow in their hearts upon seeing the empty tomb. What an important moment in the history of our Church—the witness of the Resurrection to our first Pope!

**Take a word that comes to mind and reflect on what it means to you personally. For example, the phrase “he saw and believed” might have stuck out to you. Ask yourself what this means in your own life. When have you seen and believed the power of Jesus’s Resurrection? In what moments have you come to believe in him?**

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### RESOLUTION

We are called to be witnesses to Jesus’s Resurrection. In fact, St. Paul taught us that our whole faith hinges on whether or not Jesus was raised from the dead. This is the crux of our hope, and it is the hope we are called to share with others. If Jesus Christ is truly risen, then we can be truly risen in him. This is such a joyous day because it is proof that God longs to fulfill all of our desires for him.

We have fifty days of Easter to celebrate and reflect on this great truth. This Easter season, how can you live the reality of the Resurrection more deeply? What can you do to share this reality with others?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

O Death, where is your sting?

O Hell, where is your victory?

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown.

Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen.

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice.

Christ is risen, and life reigns.

Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave.

For Christ, being risen from the dead,

is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages.

—St. John Chrysostom, Easter Homily

***“Dear brothers and sisters, Christ is risen! Let us open our hearts to hope and go forth. May the memory of his works and his words be the bright star which directs our steps in the ways of faith towards the Easter that will have no end.”***

***—Pope Francis, Easter Vigil Homily, 2016***

## Monday

Many times in John's Gospel he refers to himself as "the beloved" or "the disciple" instead of by name. One of the reasons he does this is to invite us to see ourselves in his place. One of these times happens in the Gospel for today when he says, "Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed."

Accept John's invitation and put yourself in this scene in his place. Walk into the empty tomb and pay attention to your reaction. Journal your experience.

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***"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word."***

**—John 17:20 (RSV-CE)**

## Tuesday

Today return to the psalm for this week, which says, "Let the house of Israel say, 'His mercy endures forever.'"

Reflect on your own sins and brokenness, particularly anything that you became more aware of during Lent. Bring these things to the resurrected Christ. As you lay each thing before him, look into his eyes and pray out loud the words, "His mercy endures forever."

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***"Let no one mourn that has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave."***

**—St. John Chrysostom**

## *Wednesday*

In the First Reading, St. Peter reflects that those who were called to be witnesses were those “who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.” This points to the very simple, relational root of all of our evangelization efforts. To be able to witness, we have to live life with Jesus. We have to “eat and drink” with him.

Reflect on your own relationship with Jesus. Is he a friend and constant companion? What can you do to make sure that he is?

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**“What more do we desire from such a good friend at our side? Unlike our friends in the world, he will never abandon us when we are troubled or distressed. Blessed is the one who truly loves him and always keeps him near.”**

**—St. Teresa of Avila**

## *Thursday*

Today, turn to Mary Magdalene in the Gospel. Notice the phrase, “while it was still dark.” Even in the darkness, she persevered in loving the Lord. She did not wait until the Resurrection to love him. Call to mind the times in your life where your relationship with God seems dark or dry. You may be in one now. How can you continue to be faithful to the Lord in those times?

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**“Every Christian relives the experience of Mary Magdalene. It involves an encounter which changes our lives: the encounter with a unique Man who lets us experience all God’s goodness and truth, who frees us from evil not in a superficial and fleeting way, but sets us free radically, heals us completely and restores our dignity.”**

**—Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI**

## *Friday*

Reread the First Reading today. Notice that St. Peter focuses especially on the Apostles being chosen to bear witness to the Resurrection, which they can do because they saw Jesus after his Resurrection.

Think of your own relationship with Jesus. How can you encounter Jesus's Resurrection and witness to him? When we allow Jesus to transform us, we experience the power of his Resurrection and can therefore be witnesses to it. Reflect on times you have allowed Jesus to transform you, and ask him for the grace to continue doing so.

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**—Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa**

## *Saturday*

Today in your prayer, offer yourself to the Lord and ask him to make you a witness to his Resurrection. Invite the Holy Spirit into your heart today and ask him to anoint you in an even deeper way. Try to find a place of deep silence and stillness in your heart and imagine Jesus gazing lovingly upon you. Ask him to speak to you about who he sees you as and who he made you to be.

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***“When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfillment. For here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means.”***

***—Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium***