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1st Sunday of Easter

Date: Sunday, April 20, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37–43
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23 | **Response:** Psalm 118:24
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8
Gospel Acclamation: 1 Corinthians 5:7b–8a
Gospel Reading: John 20:1–9
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

On this Easter Sunday, we stand before a mystery both ancient and ever new. We do not merely recall the Resurrection; we enter into it. We must allow it to shape us, to transform us, to light our way. This day calls us beyond the tomb, beyond the shadows, into the brilliance of the risen Christ, who, with a word, has undone death itself.

In the first reading, Peter proclaims: “God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses” (Acts 10:39). Notice: we are all witnesses. Not just Peter—all who follow the risen Christ. His testimony is not a distant echo; it is a living truth. We are summoned not to recount the past, but to bear witness to the living presence of a God who has broken the chains of death and invites us to share in His victory.

But witness, my friends, is not passive. It changes us. It compels us to act. Peter’s words are not just about what happened—they are a summons to live in a world made new. A world where the Resurrection casts aside division, raises up the lowly, and calls forth justice in a world that longs for it.

So we must ask ourselves: What are we doing with this witness? Are we content to remain in the shadows, or are we ready to step into the light? To share the hope of the Resurrection in a world so often consumed by despair? This is the Christian task: to live not as if the Resurrection were long ago, but as if it is happening still—because it is.

In the psalm, we are given words to rejoice: “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad” (Psalm 118:24). This joy does not deny the darkness—it overcomes it. Christian joy is not naïve. It is born of hope that endures even

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in sorrow. It is the victory of light over darkness, life over death.

The psalmist also declares: “I shall not die, I shall live and recount his deeds” (Psalm 118:17). These are not just the words of a survivor, but of one who has faced death and come through it. Easter joy is not the happiness of the comfortable, but the courage of those who have passed through fire and emerged into light. It declares: death does not have the last word, nor does injustice or suffering.

In the second reading, we are challenged: “Let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). The risen Christ calls us to a new way of being—shaped by honesty, humility, and grace. Easter invites us to let the Resurrection rise within us, to cleanse what binds us, and to make space for new life.

In the Gospel, Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb “while it was still dark” (John 20:1). Those few words say everything: darkness, grief, confusion. Mary doesn’t yet understand. She only knows the tomb is empty. In her uncertainty, she stands at the edge of something immense. The Resurrection is not immediately obvious. It must be discovered.

So it is with us. We, too, stand in the darkness of our own lives. But the empty tomb is not the end—it is the beginning. The promise that darkness will not overcome us. The light of Christ will shine even in places we thought beyond hope. The tomb is empty not because something has been lost, but because something astonishing has begun. The Resurrection is the first sign of the new creation, and it is still unfolding—here, now, in us.

So we are called—each of us—to step out of the shadows. To witness to the light of the risen Christ. To live as people who have been changed by that light. The Resurrection is not just something that happened; it is something that happens. It is God’s power at work in the world today. It brings hope where there is despair, light where there is darkness, life where there is death.

Let me ask you:

- How have you witnessed the risen Christ in your life?
- What is the darkness in your life that needs the light of the Resurrection?

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- How can you live as a person transformed by Easter, bringing hope into the places where you live and work?

The risen Christ is here. He stands before us, calling us into the light. Let us go forth, then, with hearts full of joy, full of courage—ready to live as people of the Resurrection.

Christ is risen. He is truly risen. Alleluia.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.