Fr Matthew Charlesworth, SJ
https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/

Easter Thursday

Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 3:11–26
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 8:2ab, 5–9 | **Response:** Psalm 8:2ab
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 118:24
Gospel Reading: Luke 24:35–48
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

The disciples had barely begun to grasp the enormity of what had happened. Their world had been upended, their hearts stretched to the breaking point—and then, just as despair threatened to overtake them—Jesus was alive. Not a ghost. Not a mirage of grief. But alive. And he stood among them, saying, "Peace be with you."

This was no empty greeting. It was a declaration. A pronouncement that the world had changed, that death had lost its dominion, that sin no longer had the final word. And yet, as he stood before them, the disciples could not believe for joy. They were still caught between the weight of their past fears and the trembling possibility of hope. So, in a moment of almost divine humor, Jesus asks, "Have you anything to eat?"

Here is the great mystery of the Resurrection: that the eternal, triumphant Christ still bears the marks of his wounds, still hungers, still eats in the presence of his friends. The glory of God is not found in escaping our humanity, but in its transformation.

Peter, in the first reading, stands in Solomon's Portico and preaches this very mystery. He calls the people to account for what they have done, for their rejection of the Holy and Righteous One. But he does not stop with condemnation. No—Peter proclaims repentance. The same people who handed Jesus over to Pilate, who called for his death, are now being invited into life. The Resurrection is not only a vindication of Christ—it is an open door for all who will turn and walk through it.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-04apr-24-yc-et-01/

Peter's words echo those of Moses and the prophets, weaving together the entire history of Israel into this single moment. This is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God who made a covenant to bless all nations through Israel. Now, in the risen Christ, that promise is fulfilled.

Psalm 8 captures this mystery in poetic splendor: *"What is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?"* This is the paradox of divine love—that the Creator of the cosmos, the one who set the stars in their place, would look upon us with such tenderness. That He would lower Himself to our frailty, bear our wounds, and rise in glory, still carrying the evidence of His suffering.

And here, my friends, is the challenge of Easter: not merely to celebrate Christ's victory, but to allow that victory to change us. To let it enter the places where fear still lingers, where sin still clings, where despair whispers that nothing can ever truly change. Peter stood in Solomon's Portico and declared that faith in Jesus' name had healed the lame man. But the greater miracle—the one that echoes through every page of Scripture—is that the Resurrection heals us all.

And this, too, is the challenge and the comfort as we grieve the death of Pope Francis. Like the disciples, we are stunned, perhaps still disbelieving. A spiritual father has gone ahead of us. His voice—so often a voice for the poor, for the forgotten, for the wounded Church—has fallen silent. But the Gospel he lived, the peace he offered, the hope he carried for a world so broken—that Gospel is still alive. The Risen Christ whom Pope Francis followed so closely now welcomes him home. But we are not left alone. We remain, not to mourn as those without hope, but to carry forward the work of Easter in the world he so loved.

In Zambia, in our towns and villages, we know this truth well: that suffering cannot be ignored, that peace is not something we inherit but something we must painstakingly build. The wounds of poverty, of corruption, of injustice are not theoretical—they are the wounds we see every day. And yet our Catholic Social Teaching reminds us: if the Resurrection is real, then no injustice is final. If Christ is risen, then every life bears infinite dignity.

Like the first disciples, we are called to be witnesses—not of a distant ideal, but of a living hope. The work of justice, the defense of the poor, the pursuit of peace—these are not side notes to the Gospel; they are the fruit of Easter faith.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-04apr-24-yc-et-01/

In the face of hardship, we proclaim not resignation but resurrection.

St. Ignatius would invite us into this mystery through imaginative contemplation. Can you place yourself in the upper room? Feel the weight of grief, the tension of unspoken fears? And then—hear his voice. See his hands. Watch as he takes the fish and eats before you. What does this moment awaken in your heart? What does it demand of you?

The great Jesuit, St. Alberto Hurtado, once asked, “Is Christ in our homes? Is Christ in our offices, in our factories, in our parliament?” That is the Easter question. And today, perhaps we ask it again with trembling lips: Is Christ in our grieving Church? And the answer is yes. Christ is in the heart of a mourning people. Christ is in the silence of our prayer. Christ is in the work we carry on.

So as we go forth today, let us carry three questions in our hearts:

- Where is Christ standing in my life, offering peace, but I am too fearful or too doubtful to recognize him?
- How is the Resurrection calling me to deeper conversion—especially in the way I see and respond to the suffering of others?
- What will it mean, this week, to be a true witness—not just to a doctrine, but to a living, breathing, risen Lord?

May the peace of the Risen Christ break through every locked door, every doubt, every fear. May we honour Pope Francis not just with words of mourning, but with lives that echo his Easter hope. And may we have the courage to bear witness to a world that is still being redeemed, still being healed, still being called to new life. Alleluia.

Source: https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-04apr-24-yc-et-01/

This homily is shared for personal and pastoral use. Please attribute the author and do not alter the meaning when quoting. If you wish this homily to be translated - there is an option on the website which will allow you to translate it into the language of your choice.

Licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license.

The author does not speak for the Society of Jesus or for the Catholic Church.

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **WhatsApp**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Telegram**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Signal**

Scan for Website on **Clearnet**

Scan for Onion Mirror **via TOR**

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.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-04apr-24-yc-et-01/