

First Reading: Acts 4:32–35

³²The full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Epistle: 1 John 1:1–2:2

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But

if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Holy Gospel: John 20:19–31

¹⁹On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

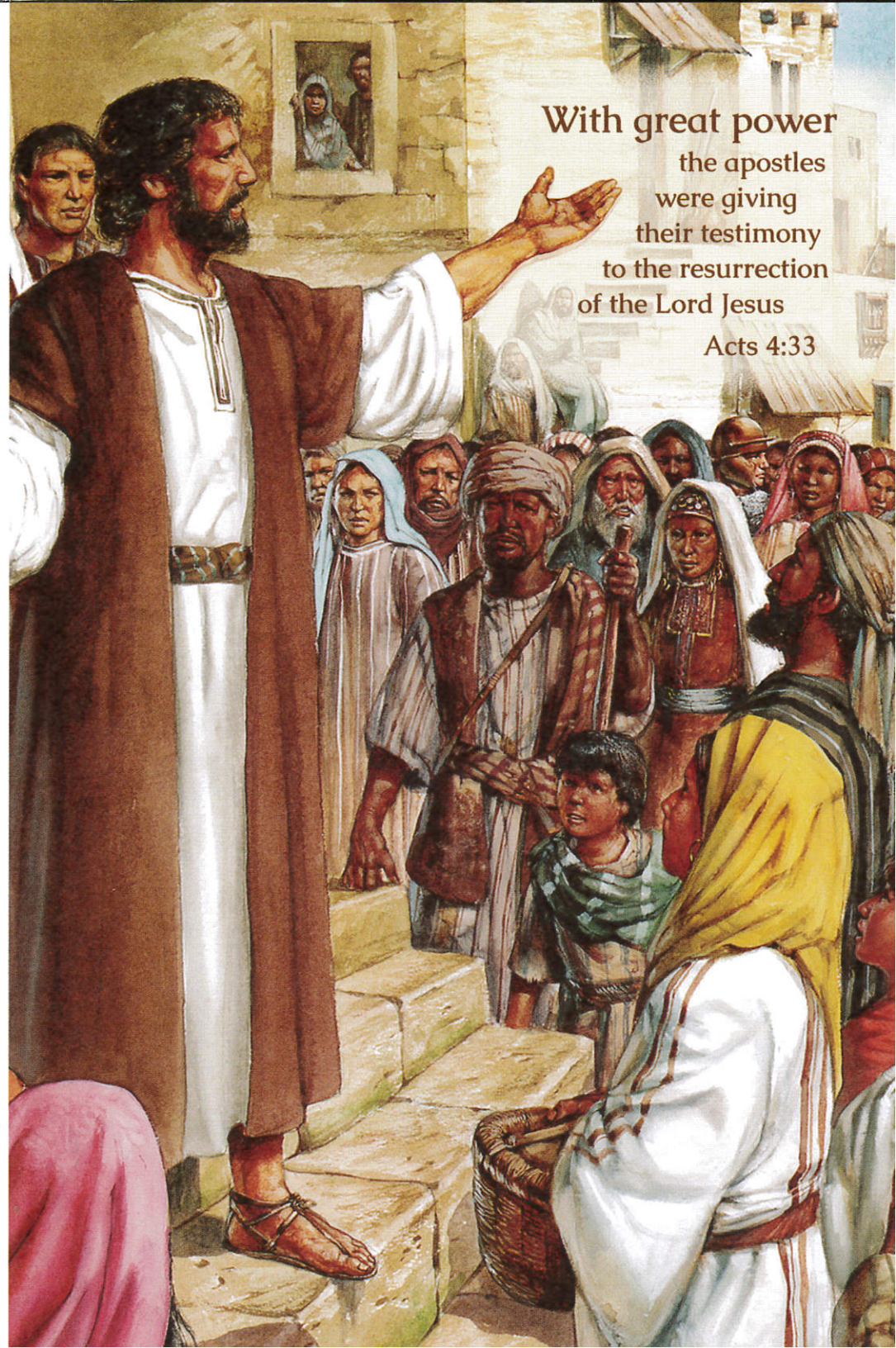
²⁴Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

With great power
the apostles
were giving
their testimony
to the resurrection
of the Lord Jesus

Acts 4:33



Easter

About the Cover: Great power characterized the apostles' preaching of Jesus' resurrection. The source of that great power did not come from them but from the One who sent them to speak with His authority. For this great power flows from the great grace of Jesus that was upon them all. Likewise, we today can do nothing apart from the grace of Jesus, who was crucified and raised for us.

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)
8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254
309-949-2516

April 7, 2024 **Second Sunday of Easter**

Divine Service Setting One (Lutheran Service Book, pg. 151)

Hymn of Invocation 477 Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

Invocation and Versicles (p. 151)

Introit *Psalm 105:1-5, 8; antiphon: 1 Peter 2:2-3*

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it
you may grow up to salvation—if indeed you have tasted that
the Lord is good.

**Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!**

Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

**Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!**

Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!

**Remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.**

He remembers his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it
you may grow up to salvation—if indeed you have tasted that
the Lord is good.

The Kyrie (p. 152)

Hymn of Praise: *This Is the Feast* (p. 155)

Salutation and Collect (p. 156)

P Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's
resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and con-
versation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus
Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Ho-
ly Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen. (*sung*)

Readings (on back of bulletin)

Gradual *adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

Christ has risen from the dead.

[God the Father] has crowned him with glory and honor.

**He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
he has put all things under his feet.**

Alleluia and Verse (Common, p. 156)

Hymn of the Day 470 O Sons and Daughters of the King

Sermon

Nicene Creed (p. 158)

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

P ...one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

Presentation of the Offering

Offertory (p. 159)

Service of the Sacrament (p. 160)

*(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the
Sacrament at St. John's.)*

Distribution Hymns

472 These Things Did Thomas Count As Real

474 Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

469 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Post-Communion Canticle: *Thank the Lord* (p. 164)

Hymn to Depart 649 Blest Be the Tie That Binds

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

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**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

Rev. Timothy Nerud **Pastor**
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Aaron Raschke

Greeter: Janet Bertsos

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

WE PRAY: Lord Jesus, risen Lord, whose love suffers long and is kind, as You were once patient with Thomas, the doubter, be patient with us and show us the nail holes again lest our humanness get in the way of our faith; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)
(Tuesday— Friday) please call ahead

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES - use this website (www.lhm.org) to have daily devotions sent to your email or phone. You never have to be without God's word.

All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—NA Adult Bible Class—NA Worship—77

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday	\$4,267.00
Weekly giving needed per 2024 Budget	\$4,481.54
Lenten offering	\$ 810.00
Easter Breakfast (Cristo Rey)	\$ 347.00

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Elders' meeting
Tuesday	6:00 pm	Council meeting
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation
Next Sunday	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

JOHN 20:19 – "Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'" The peace we have in Jesus is what makes a life of good works possible. Since we know that it is Jesus who saved us, and not our works, we are now free to do good works not out of self-interest, but for the right reasons: out of thanksgiving toward God and love for our neighbors.

ATTENDANCE BOOK—We ask everyone attending this morning to sign the red attendance book found at the end of each pew, then pass it back.

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS is a FREE monthly Lutheran magazine with different topics related to our beliefs. If you would like to start receiving a copy, there's a sign-up sheet by the coat room. April 14th is the last day to sign up.

THANK YOU to all who made the Easter Breakfast go so smoothly. I think of 1 Corinthians 16:14 "Let all that you do be done with love." We collected \$347.00 for Cristo Rey from the Easter Breakfast with the Lent suppers adding to this amount. Thanks, you all for a wonderful Easter.

Blessings, Carolyn Werner and her committee workers

SPECIAL INGATHERING—Our LWML is asking for you help in collecting items for Pregnancy Resources. You are invited to bring the listed items any-time from April 7 – April 26. Items needed include:

Diapers (Newborn and size 5-6), Newborn clothing (boy and girl), Diaper wipes, Toddler clothing (2T & 3T boy and girl), New baby bottles, Burp cloths, New pacifiers, Receiving blankets, Baby shampoo & lotion (no powder or oil), Small baby toys (teethers, etc.), Baby bath towels, Baby washcloth, Monetary checks made to "Pregnancy Resources"

CHRISTIAN LIVING—John 20:19-31: The risen Lord appeared to His disciples when they were hiding behind locked doors, in fear for their own lives. The message he shared was to comfort them, saying: “Peace be with you! Receive the Holy Spirit!” God’s peace and the Spirit’s power put a fire into their witnessing. May this same peace and power inspire us and enable us to let our Gospel lights shine brightly.

LIFE THOUGHTS—Our bodily life matters so much to God that He incarnated human flesh Himself. Even after accomplishing atonement by His body’s brokenness, He did not discard it but inhabits it by resurrection as His eternal instrument (John 20:27). When we are physically suffering sin’s consequences, our Savior’s words of forgiveness breathe healing (John 20:21-23), and His ways of faith bring peace into our very bodies. *Lord Jesus, let me take hold of You by faith until Your wounded and resurrected body redeems my own. Amen.*

DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS: The current DFM project is to continue a project already begun. In 2023, DFM funds were raised to begin ministry in as many as four new prisons in central Illinois during 2024. With the funds gathered, Central Illinois District started to fund one in January, and hopes to start more before the end of this year. The current project is to ensure that funds are available so that such new ministries can be continued in 2025. The current target is \$10,000. See the video at <https://youtu.be/LwYgCqIXzqI>

QUESTION OF THE WEEK-# 15: Are stories of angels sweet fairy tales for children or is a belief in devils is an outdated part of primitive folklore? Are angels or devils real? To hear an answer to this question, go to <https://www.cidlcms.org/myth-or-faith/3.5.mp3>

ALTAR FLOWERS—The 2023 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms. Cost for weekly flowers are \$40 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. Please sign up for a Sunday.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Remember how God works to strengthen the faith of His people as you pray:

MISSION—Pray for our children and young people, who face daily assaults on their Christian beliefs, that God would strengthen and encourage them to stand firm while sharing the Gospel.

ST JOHN’S—Mrs. Laura Anderson—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Brent, Laura, and Dane asking Your blessings upon them.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and

body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Linda Lundquist
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Aaron Raschke
Joyce DeFauw	Lynne Johnson	Drew Schillinger
Jessica Johnson	Marilyn Woods	Carolyn Wildermuth
Denise Winchell		

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Mike Erdman (nephew of Bob Erdman)

Shandel Loenser

Paul Werner (brother of Dan Werner)

Ron Powell (friend of Brad Gehn)

Justin Rittenhouse (grandson of John/Nancy Wickwire)

Marty Cavato (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)

Todd Erbst (former member of St. John’s)

Ellen Bauer (grandmother of Joel Werling)

Don Lutz (husband of an LWML friend of Liz Neumann)

Carol Eggers (friend of Marilyn Woods)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

Rylie Hallendorff (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“In the resurrection we find solace in our mourning, in our uncertainty, and in our troubles. Our longing for escape finds its hope in the resurrection of Christ. It is God’s approval upon the redemptive work of His Son. It is the assurance that as He was raised from the dead, so shall we, and all who have ‘fallen asleep in Him’ shall be raised to life eternal.” *Pastor Robert Fleischmann, Christian Life Resources – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Second Sunday of Easter

April 7, 2024

Text: Acts 4:32-35 (First Reading)

Other Texts: 1 John 1:1-2:2 (Epistle); John 20:19-31 (Gospel Reading)

“Easter Changes Everything, Especially Believers!”

“Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed!] Alleluia!” The origin of this statement, known both as the *Paschal Greeting* and the *Easter Acclamation*, is uncertain. Most likely it is a shortened form of the message spoken to the women by one of the angels at the empty tomb, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen.”¹ But whatever the specifics, this greeting in some form has been used by Christians since very early times, possibly already in the days of the apostles, but certainly not too long afterwards.

While the Acclamation’s early origin is interesting, far more important is what it joyfully proclaims: that Jesus of Nazareth, who died on a cross, bodily rose from the dead three days later. This was not merely one point of religious doctrine amongst many. No, Jesus’ resurrection *is the central focus of the Christian faith!* This is confirmed by St. Luke who records,² “With great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”³

But if the resurrection is the central focus, why then does the Apostle Paul write, “We preach Christ crucified”?⁴ Was Paul different than the other apostles? Did they preach a risen Christ while he preached a crucified one? It should be obvious that the original Eleven, St. Matthias who replaced the betrayer Judas Iscariot, and St. Paul were all called by Christ Jesus to be His apostles, each one inspired by His Spirit to proclaim, teach, and write the very Word of God to and for His Church. Consequently, they cannot preach a different Gospel! Fellow believers, let us not forget that Paul who wrote, “We preach Christ crucified” is the same one who, later in that very same letter wrote,

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.⁵

Clearly Paul, like the other apostles, saw Christ’s the resurrection as central, so preaching Christ crucified neither ignores nor downplays it in any way. But let us not lose sight of the fact that a resurrection to life first requires someone *to be dead so that they may be raised*. In other words, just as preaching the crucifixion does not deny the resurrection, neither does making the resurrection central deny nor downplay the crucifixion in any way.

It is important to remember that it is not Christ’ resurrection that paid for our sins, but His Passion, His innocent suffering and death as the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us. As St. *Peter*, one of those *other* apostles, wrote, “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers...with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”⁶ Similarly, it was not Jesus’ life after His resurrection, but *before* it, during His state of

humiliation, when He perfectly obeyed the Law for us that we can be covered us with His perfect righteousness, faithfulness, and obedience.

But if that's the case, then why was the resurrection the central focus of the apostles' preaching and teaching as Scripture records? Actually there's a very good reason, truly several! First, Jesus' resurrection is the verification that His life, suffering, and death actually counted! It is the proof positive that God the Father truly accepted His sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world, and each of us individually as our substitute. "[Jesus our Lord] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."⁷

Additionally, Jesus' resurrection proves that He is the Son of God. "[Christ Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead."⁸ Again, His rising from the dead verifies that everything He taught is true. "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me."⁹ And of the greatest comfort is the hope that all who believe in Jesus as their God, Lord and Savior from sins will also be bodily raised on the Last Day to eternal life in the new creation. "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."¹⁰

But there is another great truth that Christ's resurrection declares and more, gives to His people. In his letter to the Romans St. Paul writes these amazing words, "We were buried therefore with [Christ Jesus] by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."¹¹ While the resurrection of our body awaits our Lord's return in glory, already in Holy Baptism we have been united to Jesus, to His death and resurrection, raising us to a new life in the Holy Spirit, the very life that will culminate "in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."¹²

It is this new life in connection to the risen Christ that we heard about in today's reading from Acts. For as the apostles, those who had heard, had seen with their own eyes, and had touched with their own hands the risen Jesus,¹³ proclaimed the resurrection of the crucified Christ to the people, "great grace was upon them all."¹⁴ The grace of God's undeserved, unearned, and unearnable mercy, favor and love, which was freely bestowed upon them for the sake of His risen Son. And receiving the forgiveness of sins, the people also received the many blessings which come from that forgiveness which is received by faith.

St. Luke records one of these gifts saying, "Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul."¹⁵ This is the unity of faith in the risen Christ which can only be present amongst those who have faith in Him. Just as a living body has only one heart beating in it, only one soul within it, so it was with these believers. This large outward body of Christians had one living beating heart, one animating breath, for they are the body of the risen the Christ. They had one faith in Christ, one hope of eternal salvation, one desire to love Christ Jesus, to be faithful to Him, to live as holy people who despise sin and love righteousness, and who love one another in fulfillment of the Law.¹⁶ And one of the most obvious expressions of Christian love was their attitude towards their own property and the needs of their fellow believers.

No one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.¹⁷

Some have twisted this text to say that true Christian love requires practicing socialism, even communism, completely renouncing personal property, etc. But a fair reading of the text, along with some basic Biblical knowledge stops that cold. First, this was not forced on anyone, but was purely voluntary. Second, the Seventh Commandment protects personal property and nowhere did this divine law get overturned. But we must equally avoid what others have done with this text as well. That is, do our absolute best to ignore it and, if that fails, explain it away even as we promote free market economics! Fellow redeemed, our Lord Jesus did not die and rise to teach or endorse *any* economic system, "My kingdom is not of this world,"¹⁸ remember!

Fellow redeemed, the point of this text, the truth that is being revealed, is that for these people the resurrection was no mere intellectual fact to be memorized, neither was it some "spiritual truth" that maybe dealt with souls, but had no impact in one's life. On the contrary, because Jesus rose physically, His body returning to life, so then they recognized that being baptized into the risen Christ, believing in Him, not just their soul, but their earthly, bodily life and all that it includes, is to be used in His service.

So these faithful Christians recognized the truth that everything they owned was first given to them by God the Creator, given to them as a trust to utilize as He would have them do such. Instead of screaming in selfishness, "Mine!" in charity they called out, "Ours!" for they rightly understood that God wants His people to help the poor, the needy, the widow, and the orphan. So when there was need, those who owned property would, not under compulsion, but willingly and gladly sell them and give the proceeds to the apostles to help the needy ones.

And that truth of Christian charity has not changed over time, for the truth of Easter has not changed either, nor can it. Like those first Christians, we too have been freed from Satan's rule and sin's dominion, freed from selfishness and self-interest. We still look out for number one, but we recognize that Jesus is number one and more, Jesus is present in our fellow believers, and that helping them in need is service that Jesus takes as being done to Him directly.

And in addition to helping with financial needs, we recognize that people have other needs as well: respect, companionship, purpose, security, and such like these. Our community, being of one heart and mind is to provide such for each other as well. Since God takes care of us in body and soul, we can take care of others, acting as His hands, providing money, time, energy, our abilities, *all in Christian love*, for we are confident that God will continue to provide for us.

Dear Christians, Easter means something. Everything has changed since Christ is risen, including especially within us, in our hearts and minds. These early Christians have given us an example that we must not ignore as doing such harms our witness to the world, the building up of our congregation, and our own faith. Easter changed their lives. What about yours? God change us all, increasing in us true Christian love and charity. Amen!

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- ¹ Matthew 28:5-6a. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible English Standard Version (ESV)* unless otherwise noted.
- ² Luke wrote two books of the New Testament under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, his Gospel and the book of Acts.
- ³ Acts 4:33a.
- ⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:23.
- ⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:17-19.
- ⁶ 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- ⁷ Romans 4:25.
- ⁸ Romans 1:4.
- ⁹ John 8:28.
- ¹⁰ Philippians 3:20-21.
- ¹¹ Romans 6:4.
- ¹² Nicene Creed.
- ¹³ Cf. 1 John 1:1.
- ¹⁴ Acts 4:33b.
- ¹⁵ Acts 4:32a.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Romans 13:10.
- ¹⁷ Acts 4:32b, 34-35.
- ¹⁸ John 18:36.

Second Sunday of Easter (B)
7 April 2024

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, Your Son is the firstborn from the dead. In Him, we have been reborn into a new and living hope. Nurture us with the pure milk of Your Word, that we may grow to maturity of faith and have everlasting life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant to those ordained for Your service the gift of the Spirit, wisdom that comes down from above, and grace to faithfully fulfill their holy calling where You have placed them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As Your people are united in the common life and love of our Savior, grant that we would share that life and love with those in need, seeing that belongs to us is really not our own, but that which is entrusted to us to care for others as well. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Build up the households of Your people, that Your holy children, begotten in Baptism, may grow in Your grace and share together in Your forgiveness and life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have instituted authorities to carry out Your justice. Bless all who make, administer and judge the laws of our land. Give them wisdom, integrity and honor to serve according to Your good will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As Your Son's wounds brought gladness and peace to the troubled disciples, give Your presence and comfort to the troubled, especially Ellen, Elizabeth, Marty, Paula, Joyce, Carol, Don, Todd, Michael, Betty, Arlyn, Larry, Jessica, Lynne, Gary, Shandel, Linda, Don, Jodi, Ron, Aaron, Justin, Drew, Paul, Carolyn, and Marilyn. Comfort those who weep with the blessed joy of Easter morning. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, remember Brent, Laura, and Dane Anderson. Bless them in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father of the risen Christ, You give us the crucified and risen body and blood of our Lord in this Holy Supper. Let us taste that the Lord is good and continually grow up unto salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You that out of Your indescribable grace, for the sake of Your Son, You have given us the Holy Gospel and instituted the blessed Sacraments, that through them we may have comfort and the forgiveness of sin. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Your Word, and through the Holy Sacraments establish our faith day by day, until at last we obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Presentation of the Offering

Dear God our Father, as we lay our offering upon Your altar, we are sorry for our sins which would make us Your unprofitable and unworthy servants. Be merciful and do not look upon our sins, but pardon us for Jesus' sake whom You raised from the dead. Accept this offering, humble and inadequate though it be, and by Your Holy Spirit strengthen our faith and help us live more upright and holy Christian lives, including an increase in our will to give for the support of the Gospel. We ask that You grant this for the sake of our living Savior. Amen.