

The Vigil of the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Matthew 28:1-7
March 30th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

For He Is Risen

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And the angel answered and said unto the women, ‘Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, even as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples, “He is risen from the dead;” and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!)

My dearly beloved, after our Lord + Jesus offered up His life as a ransom for ours on the tree of the cross, after He had suffered and died, there came a man from Arimathaea named Joseph. He came to claim the dead body of our Lord. The darkness of night was fast approaching, the beginning of the Sabbath rest of our Lord + Jesus in the grave. After our Lord + Jesus was wrapped in a clean linen cloth mixed with myrrh and aloes, as was the custom of the Jews for burial, He was placed into a new grave. One that had never been used, which Joseph of Arimathaea had purchased in a garden for himself, but gave to our Lord. They rolled a large stone over the mouth of the tomb as darkness began to arise. This was the first day of our Lord + Jesus being in the tomb.

While our Lord + Jesus took His Sabbath rest in the grave, on the day after the day of Preparation, on the second day of our Lord + Jesus being in the tomb, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pontius Pilate and declared to him that the tomb must be made secure. It must be sealed, and guards placed before it to watch over it lest someone come and steal the body and declare that the Lord had risen from the dead. The end of chapter twenty-seven of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew declares, “Pilate said unto them, ‘Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can.’ So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.” While the chief priests and Pharisees sealed the stone and set the guard to watch over our Lord’s tomb, our Lord + Jesus descended into Hell to declare victory over death, Hell, and the devil and his horde.

Now we have come to the third day of our Lord + Jesus being in the tomb; the day of His resurrection. Early after the Sabbath, in the evening as we would consider it, the women, St. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, went and bought spices and ointments that they might anoint the body of the Lord + Jesus. Then in the morning, while it was still dark, as the dawn was

breaking, St. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre. They expected to see the tomb sealed with a large stone in front. They pondered who would roll away the stone. But there was an earthquake, for an angel of the Lord had descended from Heaven, and the stone was rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. The guards had fainted from fear and trembling at the sight. And this what the women find when they reach the tomb: the stone rolled away, and an angel sitting on the stone, and proclaiming to them that the Lord + Jesus, the Christ, was not there, for He is risen from the dead.

Good Friday ends in darkness. Easter Sunday begins in darkness. We began our Vigil in darkness, the only light to begin our Vigil was the light of the Pascal Candle, representing the light of the Christ. His light shines in the darkness. And now His light fully shines so that all darkness and gloom has been vanquished. Easter began in darkness as the women went to the tomb. The same darkness that existed when our Lord + Jesus was placed in the tomb. But as the first rays of dawn began to shine, it was clear that our Lord had indeed been raised from the dead. He had defeated and conquered death, and thereby defeating all the powers of darkness. His resurrection from the dead dispels all darkness. His resurrection is the light that shines in this dark world.

For His resurrection declares to this world filled with the darkness of sin, that He has fully atoned for our sins, and rescued us from the powers of darkness. He has brought life and immortality to light. He is now the Light that leads sinful mankind out of the darkness of sin and shame. He is the Light that leads men out of death and the grave. He leads us by His light into life and immortality. His grave is empty for He is risen from the dead.

We have also walked in darkness, the darkness of sin and shame. We walk in this vale of tears to our graves. We deserve death and the grave on account of our manifold sins and trespasses. But our grave holds no fear. For only our body will go into the grave. Our souls will enter into our heavenly Paradise the very day of our death. For our Lord has died and been buried in the grave for three days. From Good Friday to Holy Saturday, to the first hours of Easter Sunday, He rested in the grave, making our graves obsolete. He was buried in the grave in darkness, and He rises out of the tomb as the world is bathed in light.

We were also born in the darkness of sin, but through the waters of Holy Baptism, we have been washed and renewed by the Holy Ghost so that we may walk in newness of life. We now walk in the Light of the Christ. We are now surrounded by His light. So that as we walk through this dark world, this vale of tears, the Light of the Christ never departs us. He is always there with us to shine the Light of His saving Gospel upon us. His Gospel is that He has redeemed us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He now gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation. No more are we enslaved to the powers of darkness, but we now walk in the Light of the Christ. He leads us out of this dark, sin-filled world, into our eternal home in Heaven. There the Light of the Christ will shine among us and all the saints who have gone before us with the light of a thousand suns. And we will bask in His light forever and ever.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us lift high our lit candles. For these represent the light of the Christ among us and in us. The light of these candles dispels the darkness of night. But these are only a shadow of the true light. For the Light of the Christ, our Lord and Savior, and Redeemer, shines among us as the Firstfruits of the dead. He is risen from the dead. He has defeated sin, death, and the devil. He called us out of the darkness of sin and death, that we might live with Him forever in Heaven. Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!) In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of

the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!