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**Morning Prayer: The Fifth Sunday of Easter - 2020**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
*The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a
copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in
the presence of God on our behalf.    *Hebrews 9:24*

You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon
you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all
Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.    *Acts 1::8*

**Confession of Sin**

*The Officiant says to the people*

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of
Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth his praise, to
hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf
of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our
salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and
mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with
penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may
obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Officiant and People together, all kneeling*

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Priest alone stands and says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. *Amen.*

**The Invitatory and Psalter**

*All stand*

|  |  |
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| *Officiant* | Lord, open our lips. |
| *People* | And our mouth shall proclaim your praise. |

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*Officiant and People*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

*Except in Lent, add*    Alleluia.

Alleluia. The Lord is risen indeed: Come let us adore him.
Alleluia.

**Christ our Passover**     *Pascha nostrum
1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Romans 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22*

Alleluia.
Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; \*
    therefore let us keep the feast,
Not with old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, \*
    but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia.

Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; \*
    death no longer has dominion over him.
The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all; \*
    but the life he lives, he lives to God.
So also consider yourselves dead to sin, \*
    and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.

Christ has been raised from the dead, \*
    the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
For since by a man came death, \*
    by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, \*
    so in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.

**The Psalm or Psalms Appointed**

**Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

***In te, Domine, speravi***

**1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; \*
deliver me in your righteousness.**

**2 Incline your ear to me; \*
make haste to deliver me.**

**3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; \*
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.**

**4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, \*
for you are my tower of strength.**

**5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, \*
for you have redeemed me,
O Lord, O God of truth.**

**15 My times are in your hand; \*
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.**

**16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, \*
and in your loving-kindness save me."**

**The Lessons**

Acts 7:55-60

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

**9**    **The First Song of Isaiah**    *Ecce, Deus*
         *Isaiah 12:2-6*

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*
    I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \*
    and he will be my Savior.
Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*
    from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say, \*
    Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;
Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*
    see that they remember that his Name is exalted.
Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*
    and this is known in all the world.
Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*
    for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*
    as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

**1 Peter 2:2-10**

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

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner”,

and

“A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,
but now you are God’s people;

once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

**19**    **The Song of the Redeemed**    *Magna et mirabilia*
          *Revelation 15:3-4*

O ruler of the universe, Lord God,
great deeds are they that you have done, \*
    surpassing human understanding.
Your ways are ways of righteousness and truth, \*
O King of all the ages.

Who can fail to do you homage, Lord,
and sing the praises of your Name? \*
    for you only are the Holy One.
All nations will draw near and fall down before you, \*
    because your just and holy works have been revealed.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*
    as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

**Hymn 192 “This Joyful Eastertide Vruechten**

**1. This joyful Eastertide,
away with care and sorrow!
My Love, the Crucified,
hath sprung to life this morrow.**

**Refrain:
Had Christ, that once was slain,
ne'er burst his three-day prison,
our faith had been in vain;
but now is Christ arisen,
arisen, arisen, arisen.**

**2. Death's flood hath lost its chill,
since Jesus crossed the river:
Lord of all life, from ill
my passing soul deliver. (Refrain)**

**3. My flesh in hope shall rest,
and for a season slumber,
till trump from east to west
shall wake the dead in number. (Refrain)**

**John 14:1-14**

Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

**Sermon –**

**Easter 5a 2020**

**“He prepares the dwelling places by preparing those who are to dwell in them.”**

* **Saint Augustine**

**Jesus is having is his last supper with his disciples, and Jesus is the only one present who really knows what is happening. Jesus knows when the last call will be made, when the lights will flicker, and when the music will be turned off.**

**We are glimpsing the turning point of the evening.**

**The streets of Jerusalem are all noise, music, reverence and the crackling energy that comes with any religious festival season, because it is Passover in the Holy City. There are Jewish pilgrims throughout the Roman Empire who have descended upon the city. The Israelites are reminding themselves and one another of God’s mercy. God has delivered them, and they are praying fervently that God will deliver them again; not necessarily from Egypt this time, but from Roman occupation.**

**The disciples have gathered perhaps with some small talk. There has been the remarkable event of their rabbi washing of their feet. But more importantly during the evening, Jesus settles into tell his friends the truth; as though Jesus is crashing his own party with an uninvited guest – the truth. At the end of the previous chapter of John’s Gospel, Jesus tells his friends the truth that they do not know one another, or themselves, as well as they might.**

**There is betrayal, and there will be denial before the cock crows.**

 **It causes me to wonder about the disciples.**

**How could they have lived together through so much and yet known one another so little? How could they have made the mutual sacrifice of homes, jobs, futures, and social standing, only to find that they may have not known one another as well as Jesus knew each of them?**

**Disclosing this betrayal sets a new stage in John’s Gospel, giving Jesus the opportunity of uttering some of the most profound words spoken to human beings.**

**With his own execution staring him in the face, Jesus remains the Good Shepherd by speaking the truth in love to his friends. Jesus goes the distance and tells them that in spite of their stupidity, their selfishness, their own lack of self-awareness, and their uncanny ability to make all things of God about themselves . . . Jesus is still going to give them entrance into the state of being they cannot give to themselves. After telling his friends what he knows to be true about them, Jesus then gives them his own promise of love.**

**It leaves me a bit speechless. On his last night, after letting his friends into the secret about how they will fail him at his greatest moment of need, the Good Shepherd proves his worth by assuring his friends that He will not fail them, although a few of them will fail Him. This is precisely how God’s love is at work in the world.**

 **Surrounded by the noise and activity of their most holy, annual, religious holiday in the great and holy city of Jerusalem, Jesus begins explaining in a small room to a group of his friends that God is placing the doorway and God is building the bridge. It is being positioned within the world in such a way that almost no one can see divine hand moving. The Passover within the Passover is occurring in the small room of the last supper.**

 **True to form, Thomas gives voice to the kinds of questions that live inside all of our heads after Jesus explains what is actually happening in Jerusalem on this night. “Hey, I don’t get it. I don’t get it . . . where are you going? How will we know the way to where you are going?”**

**In this moment Jesus closes all the fire escapes.**

**“I am the way the truth the life . . . No one comes to the Father except through me.” Sitting with these words for a few moments, considering the time and place in which they are spoken, I believe we will see that it is an answer that actually lives at the end of all questions. Jesus is giving Thomas and the disciples the map of all maps. I believe that if we will sit with these words long enough, we will see that they are the answer to all human questions about our lives and our place in the world.**

 **Jesus is “the way” because he maintains a vertical relationship with God, while also living in a horizontal relationship with his fellow human beings; Jesus is complete both vertically and horizontally in expressing God’s purposes for humanity.**

 **Jesus is “the truth” because in a long line of failed approximations to speak and act in God’s name, Jesus the incarnate Word, or Logos, of God is the most complete expression of the relationship that God desires for his children. Jesus is God’s transparency. It is the summary of the short theological lecture that Jesus shares with Philip in this passage.**

**“You have seen me you have seen the Father . . . The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”**

 **The result is that if we will walk in this particular “way,” and acknowledge that Jesus is this particular “truth,” we will one day awake to find that we are truly alive; that we are alive not just for a season, but alive forever with God. In that Jesus is the way and the truth, He is also the life; a life whose definition we have yet to fully comprehend.**

 **John’s Gospel is articulating something that for all purposes is impossible for human beings to fully describe or understand; it is a love that explodes our categories of experience and comprehension. How God loves us is a lesson that we continue learning until we leave this place.**

 **Because no one has spoken as Jesus has spoken of God. Jesus is blessing his friends and followers, some of whom are in the process of soon denying Him. The explanation is that for those who walk in this Way, those who will trust this Truth, those who will accept this Life, they will have an intimation of God as “Abba” and Father. It is a new and unprecedented relationship that each human being might have with God that is intimate and precious – the way that a child suddenly runs to their parent across a crowded room.**

 **Buddha never says something like this. Moses never says something like this; nor does Muhammed or Krishna. The point that John is making is that Jesus is speaking something completely unique into being. This “Abba experience” lives in the heart of the Gospel. Jesus opens his own life with a graceful gesture to an insubordinate humanity, you and me, so that we might share his own intimacy with God. The Incarnation is the doorway. It is the ultimate and only blessing that really matters in the end.**

 **The gift on his last night, as Jesus speaks the truth in love to his friends, is that although they will very predictable fail him, He has no intention of failing them. In fact the opposite is true. He not only does not fail us, he goes ahead to become the guide through a wilderness that we would never escape; the wilderness of death, and the wilderness of an eternal existence apart from God.**

**Because of his Good Shepherd’s love, we can have confidence that when we call upon him, we are never lost, and we always have a story beyond those that begin and end in this world.**

**Jesus gives his friends the assurance that in the days to come, in the events that are unforeseen for them – they already have everything that they need – because they have Him, and He is going forward in such a way that He will always have them.**

***In January 2000, leaders of Charlotte, North Carolina, invited their favorite son, Billy Graham, to a luncheon. Billy initially hesitated to accept the invitation because he struggles with Parkinson's disease. But the Charlotte leaders said, "We don't expect a major address. Just come and let us honor you." So he agreed.***

***After wonderful things were said about him, Graham stepped to the rostrum, looked at the crowd, and said, "I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist who this month has been honored by Time magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of each passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his other pocket. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat by him. He couldn't find it. The conductor said, 'Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.' Einstein nodded appreciatively.***

***"The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. The conductor rushed back and said, 'Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.' Einstein looked at him and said, 'Young man, I too know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going.'"***

***Billy Graham continued, "See the suit I'm wearing? It's a brand new suit. My wife, my children, and my grandchildren are telling me I've gotten a little slovenly in my old age. I used to be a bit more fastidious. So I went out and bought a new suit for this luncheon and one more occasion. You know what that occasion is? This is the suit in which I'll be buried. But when you hear I'm dead, I don't want you to immediately remember the suit I'm wearing. I want you to remember this: I not only know who I am, I also know where I'm going."***

***John Huffman, "Who Are You, and Where Are You Going?"***

**The Apostles' Creed**

*Officiant and People together, all standing*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
    creator of heaven and earth;
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
    He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
        and born of the Virgin Mary.
    He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
        was crucified, died, and was buried.
    He descended to the dead.
    On the third day he rose again.
    He ascended into heaven,
        and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
    He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
    the holy catholic Church,
    the communion of saints,
    the forgiveness of sins
    the resurrection of the body,
    and the life everlasting. Amen.

**The Prayers**

 *The People stand or kneel*

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| --- | --- |
| *Officiant* | The Lord be with you. |
| *People* | And also with you. |
| *Officiant* | Let us pray. |

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*Officiant and People*

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| --- |
| Our Father, who art in heaven,     hallowed be thy Name,     thy kingdom come,     thy will be done,         on earth as it is in heaven.Give us this day our daily bread.And forgive us our trespasses,     as we forgive those         who trespass against us.And lead us not into temptation,     but deliver us from evil.For thine is the kingdom,     and the power, and the glory,     for ever and ever. Amen. |

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 **A**

V.    Show us your mercy, O Lord;
R.    And grant us your salvation.
V.    Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R.    Let your people sing with joy.
V.    Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R.    For only in you can we live in safety.

V.    Lord, keep this nation under your care;
R.    And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
V.    Let your way be known upon earth;
R.    Your saving health among all nations.
V.    Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R.    Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
V.    Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R.    And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

*The Collect of the Day*

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*A Collect for Sundays*

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of
the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this
day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week
to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. *Amen.*

*A Collect for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the
earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those
who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people
everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the
nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh;
and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

﻿*For Sick Persons*

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in
time of need: We humbly beseech thee to behold, visit, and
relieve all they sick and ill servants, for whom our prayers are desired.
Look upon them with the eyes of thy mercy; comfort them with
a sense of thy goodness; preserve them from the temptations
of the enemy; and give them patience under their affliction. In
thy good time, restore them to health, and enable them to lead
the residue of this life in thy fear, and to thy glory; and grant
that finally they may dwell with thee in life everlasting; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*For Doctors and Nurses, Hospital Administrators, and Hospital Staff*

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study
and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of
disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit,
that by their ministries the health of the community may be
promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. *Amen*.

*For Those Accepting Isolation On Behalf of the Community*

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring
forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I
am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still,
help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it
patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly.
Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit
of Jesus. *Amen.*

*We invite your own prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving at this time.*

*Silence*

*A Collect for Guidance*

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our
being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by
your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our
life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are
ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
*Amen.*

**Hymn 487 Come My Way, My Truth, My Life The Call**

1. Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
such a way as gives us breath;
such a truth as ends all strife;
such a life as killeth death.

2. Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
such a light as shows a feast;
such a feast as mends in length;
such a strength as makes his guest.

3. Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
such a joy as none can move;
such a love as none can part;
such a heart as joys in love.

*The General Thanksgiving*

*Officiant and People*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

*Alleluia, alleluia!*  Let us bless the Lord.
*Thanks be to God.  Alleluia, alleluia!*

*The Officiant may then conclude with one of the following*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.
*Amen.*    *2 Corinthians 13:14*

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in
believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*
*Romans 15:13*

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely
more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from
generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus
for ever and ever. *Amen.*    *Ephesians 3:20,21*