

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

First Week of Easter

March 31, 2024, through April 7, 2024

Patristic Quote for the Week —**CHRYSOSTOM** (344-407AD): Why “with fear and great joy”? They had seen an amazing event. It was beyond all their expectations. The tomb had been empty where they had just before seen him laid. The angel led them to the tomb that they might become witnesses both of his tomb and his resurrection. It is evident that no one could have stolen his body, when so many soldiers were sitting nearby him. Hence he raised up himself. For this reason they rejoiced and stood in awe. The women received the reward of continuing with him. They were first to see and gladly declare not only what had been said to them but also what they themselves had seen. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 89.2.¹

Life Thoughts-- The resurrected Jesus first appeared to a very sinful, formerly demon-possessed woman, Mary Magdalene. The hope of the resurrection is for those hopelessly lost in their sins. In one sense, we could say that this hope is especially for those who are—like the rest of us—hopelessly lost! Thanks be to God! *Heavenly Father, draw me into rejoicing in Jesus’ resurrection and the value it gives to all humankind. Amen.*

Stewardship Thoughts-- John 20:1 – “Now on the first day of the week ...” All is made new by the resurrection of Jesus! Even the day of worship has transitioned from the Old Testament’s Sabbath (Saturday) to the Lord’s Day of the New Testament (Sunday). For the Lord has made all things new: In rising from the dead as the new Adam, He has begun a new week for a new creation. We are also made new in Him — a new heart, a new life, new desires, a new outlook toward God. All this comes from our risen Lord’s grace. Especially after the sort of year we’ve had since last Easter, it sure is good news to hear that the Lord makes all things start afresh!

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:12-25

“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 this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”

Read or Chant Psalm 22

Day	Bible Stories for Daily Devotions	Second Reading
Sun., March 31	Gospel Lesson, Easter Sunday—Mark 16:1-8	Isaiah 52:13-15
Mon., April 1	“I have seen the Lord”—John 20:11-18	1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Tues., April 2	Jesus revealed by the Sea of Tiberius—John 21:1-3	Ezekiel 21:25-27
Wed, April 3	Peter went toward the tomb—John 20:1-10	Haggai 2:20-23
Thurs, April 4	Remember how he told you...(Luke 24:1-12)	Zechariah 6:9-15
Fri., April 5	He is not here, for he has risen, as He said—Matthew 28:1-15	Ezekiel 17:22-24
Sat., April 6	Jesus appeared to the twelve at the table.—Mark 16:9-13	Isaiah 44:21-28
Sun., April 7	Gospel Lesson, First Sunday of Easter—John 20:19-31	Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹ Simonetti, Manlio, ed. 2002. [Matthew 14-28](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Pray the Collect for Easter Sunrise:

Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Personal Prayers and Petitions

Lord's Prayer

Hymn of the Week

Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands

LSB 458

1 Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands
For our offenses given;
But now at God's right hand He stands
And brings us life from heaven.
Therefore let us joyful be
And sing to God right thankfully
Loud songs of alleluia!
Alleluia!

2 No son of man could conquer death,
Such ruin sin had wrought us.
No innocence was found on earth,
And therefore death had brought us
Into bondage from of old
And ever grew more strong and bold
And held us as its captive.
Alleluia!

3 Christ Jesus, God's own Son, came down,
His people to deliver;
Destroying sin, He took the crown
From death's pale brow forever:
Stripped of pow'r, no more it reigns;
An empty form alone remains;
Its sting is lost forever.
Alleluia!

4 It was a strange and dreadful strife
When life and death contended;
The victory remained with life,
The reign of death was ended.
Holy Scripture plainly saith
That death is swallowed up by death,
Its sting is lost forever.
Alleluia!

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Richard Massie, 1800–87, alt.
Text: Public domain

Looking forward to Second Sunday of Easter

April 7, 2024

HYMNS: 487, 470, 633, 461

Ezekiel 37:1-14

1 John 5:4-10

John 20:19-31