

The Second Sunday of Easter

Quasimodogeniti

April 16, 2023

My story of *Quasimodogeniti*. I remember my pastor mentioning Quasimodogeniti Sunday when I was growing up. He taught the congregation all the Latin names for the Sundays of the Church Year and I have to confess that I am fond of them. *Quasimodogeniti* is a somewhat startling and fun name to say but that's not why I like this Sunday so much. It's because of the message of 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation."

My love of this Sunday began in 1978. I attended the Minnesota North District Convention. It was my first convention as a pastor and I eagerly looked forward to it. At the opening service, the First Vice-President of the District preached on 1 Peter 2:2. It was one of the most inspiring and memorable sermons that I have ever heard.

Upon reflection, I realized that one of the reasons that it was so remarkable to me is because it was the first sermon that I had heard in almost a year. As a new pastor, I had preached every Sunday and it wasn't until that day that I was able to sit and drink in the wonderful message of God's word proclaimed by someone else.

This experience drove home to me the importance of craving the pure spiritual milk of God's word and growing in the faith. When we are absent from church (even when we are doing our own Bible study), we lack the full impact of the Word of God on our lives. When people claim that they can be Christians without going to church, they are deceiving themselves. This is like saying that you can be a baby without craving milk! Indeed it's a true statement but a baby that doesn't crave milk will be a weak baby indeed.

Pastor Quardokus

An Easter Salutation *adapted from 2 Timothy 1:10 & Psalm 118*

- L** Christ is risen! Alleluia!
- C** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!
- L** Christ has destroyed death. Alleluia!
- C** And has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Alleluia!

- L** The Lord is my strength and my song. Alleluia!
- C** He has become my salvation. Alleluia!
- L** I will not die, but live. Alleluia!
- C** I will proclaim what the Lord has done. Alleluia!
- L** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
- C** as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

- L** I will not die, but live. Alleluia!
- C** I will proclaim what the Lord has done. Alleluia!
- L** Christ is risen! Alleluia!
- C** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Lutheran Service Book 469, Lutheran Worship 142, The Lutheran Hymnal 193



- 1 “Christ the Lord is ris’n to - day!” Saints on earth and an - gels say;
2 Love’s re - deem - ing work is done, Fought the fight, the bat - tle won;
3 Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Christ hath burst the gates of hell.
4 Lives a - gain our glo - rious King! Where, O death, is now thy sting?



Raise your joys and tri - umphs high; Sing, ye heav’ns, and earth, re - ply.
Lo! Our Sun’s e - clipse is o’er; Lo! He sets in blood no more.
Death in vain for - bids His rise; Christ has o - pened par - a - dise.
Once He died our souls to save; Where thy vic - to - ry, O grave?

5 Soar we now where Christ has led;
Foll’wing our exalted Head.
Made like Him, like Him we rise;
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

6 Hail the Lord of earth and heav’n!
Praise to Thee by both be giv’n!
Thee we greet triumphant now:
Hail, the resurrection, Thou!

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

C Amen.

L O Lord, open my lips,

C and my mouth will declare your praise.

L Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C make haste to help me, O Lord.

Introit Ps. 105:1–5, 8; antiphon: 1 Peter 2:2–3

L 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.

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

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

C Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!

L Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually!

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

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

C 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.

L 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.

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.

L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

C Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: 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.

C Amen.

Acts 5:29–42

²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

³³When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.

³⁶For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, ⁴⁰and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**
- L** Christ has risen from the dead.
- C** **God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,**
- L** He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
- C** **he has put all things under his feet.**

adapt. from Matt. 28:7; Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:6

1 Peter 1:3–9

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Verse of the Day Romans 6:9; John 20:29b

- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.
- C** **Alleluia. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.**

John 20:19–31

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twentieth chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

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 never 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.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

O Sons and Daughters of the King

Lutheran Service Book 470, Lutheran Worship 130, The Lutheran Hymnal 208



1 O sons and daugh - ters of the King, Whom heav'n - ly
2 That Eas - ter morn, at break of day, The faith - ful
3 An an - gel clad in white they see, Who sits and
4 That night the a - pos - tles met in fear; A - mong them
5 When Thom - as first the tid - ings heard That they had



hosts in glo - ry sing, To - day the grave has lost its sting!
wom - en went their way To seek the tomb where Je - sus lay.
speaks un - to the three, "Your Lord will go to Gal - i - lee."
came their mas - ter dear And said, "My peace be with you here."
seen the ris - en Lord, He doubt - ed the dis - ci - ples' word.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,
And look upon My hands, My feet;
Not faithless but believing be."
Alleluia!

7 No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
"You are my Lord and God!" he cried.
Alleluia!

8 How blest are they who have not seen
And yet whose faith has constant been,
For they eternal life shall win.
Alleluia!

9 On this most holy day of days
Be laud and jubilee and praise:
To God your hearts and voices raise.
Alleluia!

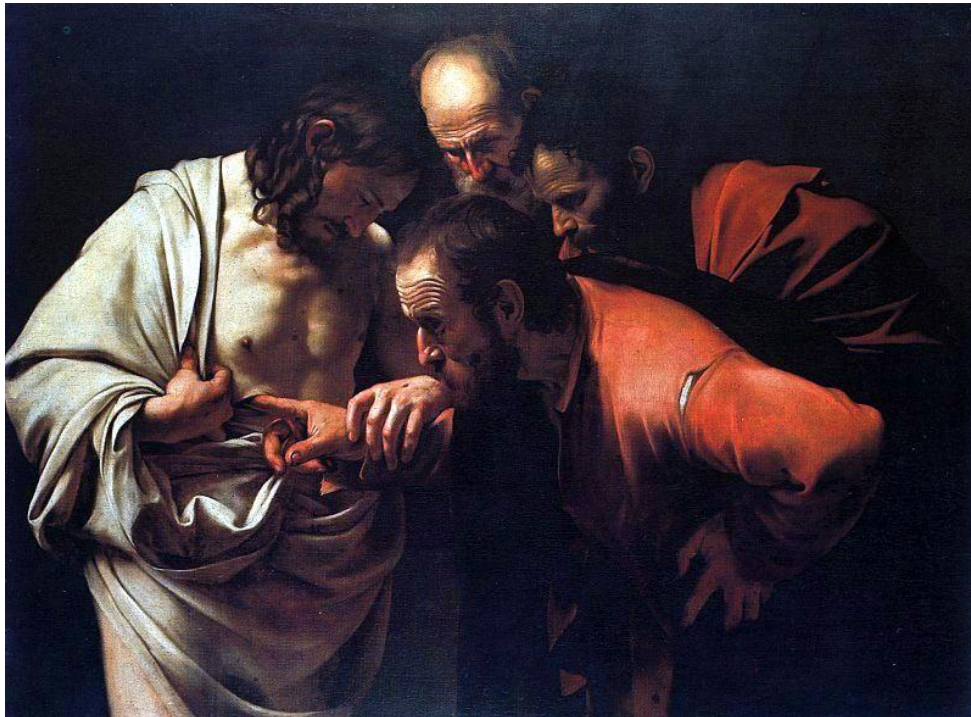
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Devotional thoughts:

This is the Second Sunday of Easter. I suppose that is a name that we can live with but it seems to be a rather bland name compared to other options. As you may know from reading above, the historic name for today is Quasimodogeniti Sunday. Quasimodogeniti means as “newborn babes” which are the first words of the introit in Latin from 1 Peter 2:2. However, it is not the only other option for this Sunday. Years ago I learned from my Anglican priest friend, Fr. Clark Day, that this Sunday is also known as Low Sunday (for obvious reasons). On Easter Sunday all of the faithful were in church. On this day, only the every-Sunday Christians are in attendance. For a pastor, it is a good Sunday to take note of who is in their regular pew. Unfortunately, I have known quite a few pastors who choose to also take a little vacation on the Sunday after Easter and so miss this glorious opportunity.

Those who were in church year after year on Quasimodogeniti Sunday when I was preaching know that this is my favorite Latin named Sunday (again as mentioned above) but they will also know that this is Doubting Thomas Sunday from the annual reading of John 20:19–31. On Easter evening, Jesus appears to the disciples when Thomas was not there. When the disciples see Thomas, they report to him the wonderful news of Jesus’ resurrection but Thomas refuses to believe. Then on the following Sunday, Jesus appears again behind locked doors and gives special attention to Thomas so that he will come to faith. To this, Thomas gives the most wonderful confession of faith when he exclaims to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

I am an art lover (I know—that’s hard for you to believe ;-)) I am particularly fond of paintings produced from the Renaissance through Impressionism (Sorry to all you modern and post-modern art fans). My favorite painting of Doubting Thomas is *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* by Caravaggio. Historical inaccuracies aside, it is a marvelous depiction of Jesus’ personal concern for Thomas and his faith.



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, Caravaggio 1602

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This is a good Sunday for us to remember that Jesus has a deep and abiding concern for each one of us and our faith in Him. In the days of mega-churches and superstar TV evangelists, it is a good day for us to pause and contemplate that no one is expendable in Jesus' church. (Small churches seem to have a little better grasp of this.)

It goes without saying that we may at times doubt. Our skepticism is fueled by the secular spirit of our times, the profane nature of society, and possibly the difficult situation in which we find ourselves during our current national crisis. If this is particularly true for you at this time, pause and reflect on Jesus and Thomas. It would have been easy to write off Thomas because of his doubting. It might have been convenient to brush him aside as unnecessary. It may have been tempting to point to his doubt as a failure and reject him as unworthy.

Jesus did none of those. He went to the cross for doubters and unbelievers of all kinds. He goes out of His way to bring the good news of the resurrection personally to Thomas.

Jesus does the same for you. In times of distress and doubt, Jesus never leaves you behind or declares you unworthy. Rather, He keeps His promise to never leave you or forsake you. Even if you have at some time come to the point of rejecting Jesus and His resurrection, He is always there to welcome you home into the family of God. Like the father of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), He is always there for you.

If you happen to be in church next year on “Low Sunday,” look about at the empty places and remember Thomas, remember that there may have been a time when you were unfaithful. Determine to go the extra mile, as Jesus did, for those who doubt like Thomas.

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

L Let us pray. God of mercy, keep us from the doubts and fears that cripple us and prevent us from knowing the fullness of Your saving peace and gracious presence. Teach us to trust in Your Word and to believe with all our hearts, minds, bodies and strength in Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins and raised for our justification. Teach us to love one another as You have loved us. Guide us so that in our neighborhoods and communities we may manifest the love of Christ as well as His strength. Deliver us from all that would threaten our homes and families. Protect the police, firefighters, disaster-relief workers and medical personnel who attend to us, as well as the places where we live and work. through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C 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 forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

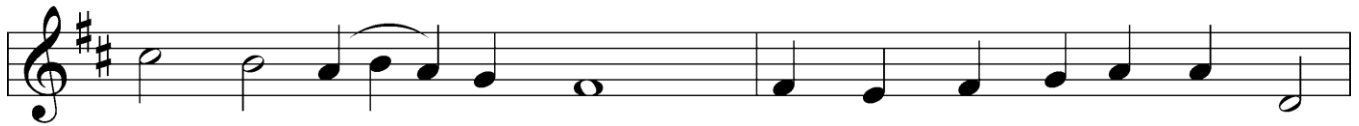
C Amen.

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Lutheran Service Book 633, Lutheran Worship 139, The Lutheran Hymnal 201



1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing Praise to
2 Praise we Him, whose love di - vine Gives His
3 Where the pas - chal blood is poured, Death's dread
4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Pas - chal



our vic - to - rious King, Who has washed us in the tide
sa - cred blood for wine, Gives His bod - y for the feast—
an - gel sheathes the sword; Is - rael's hosts tri - um - phant go
vic - tim, pas - chal bread; With sin - cer - i - ty and love



Flow - ing from His pierc - ed side. Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ the vic - tim, Christ the priest. Al - le - lu - ia!
Through the wave that drowns the foe. Al - le - lu - ia!
Eat we man - na from a - bove. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 Mighty Victim from the sky,
Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;
You have conquered in the fight,
You have brought us life and light.
Alleluia!

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!
This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,
Newborn souls in You to be.
Alleluia!

6 Now no more can death appall,
Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise,
And Your saints in You shall rise.
Alleluia!

8 Father, who the crown shall give,
Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days:
Three in One, Your name we praise.
Alleluia!

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Week of the Second Sunday of Easter

April 17 - 22

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 1, 2

O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave has lost its sting!
Alleluia!

That Easter morn, at break of day,
The faithful women went their way
To seek the tomb where Jesus lay.
Alleluia!

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L Christ is Risen!
C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

L Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
C Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

(Romans 6:9; John 20:29b)

Introit Ps. 105:1–5, 8; antiphon: 1 Peter 2:2–3

- L** 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.
- C** **Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!**
- L** Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!
- C** **Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!**
- L** Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually!
- C** **Remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered.**
- L** He remembers his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.
- C** **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.**
- L** 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.

1 Peter 2:2-3 King James Version (KJV)

² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

³ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Every generation has advantages and disadvantages. The generation presently in the full flower of adulthood (identified by some as millennials—a term research shows they don’t like) has the advantage of having been raised with technology. Tech is as familiar and comfortable for them as Lincoln Logs and Tinker Toys for my generation. The generation of my grandparents saw a marvelous revolution in transportation, from horses to airplanes. This may have introduced advances in society even more amazing than modern tech. My parents’ generation experienced many difficulties that the following generations have yet to endure, including the great depression and World War II. Yet out of that, they developed a ruggedness and frugality that will not soon be matched. My generation, boomers, have developed a sense of perspective with one foot in the pre-tech world and one in the post-tech world.

Of course, some things stay the same for each generation. Every generation goes through young adulthood knowing all the answers to the ills of society. Every generation grows to maturity and learns the disappointment of unrealized idealism and false solutions. In and among everything else that can be said about each generation, we all need the basic necessities of life.

At the beginning of our national emergency, this has been reinforced over and over again. Going to the store and finding what you need could be a real challenge. In fact, in Michigan as well as other places, a debate raged as to what exactly are the basic necessities of life. For example, according to the original Covid-19 regulations, kayaking was a necessity but golfing was not.

Apart from where you landed in that debate, one thing is certain: when we were infants we needed milk. Research has shown that the very best milk with the greatest benefit is the milk that God allows mothers to provide to their babies. Mothers know this. Babies crave it. Tiny little infants soon develop chubby little cheeks.

St. Peter tells us that healthy Christians will crave God’s word the way babies crave pure milk. Of course, for one reason or another some babies will not crave their mother’s milk or may be deprived of it. These babies will often struggle to grow and thrive. So also this is true of Christians who are deprived of God’s word or lack a desire for it. Their faith may survive (for a while) but it seldom develops the vigor and gusto of those whose daily bread is God’s message of life and salvation through Jesus.

Every day we need to be reminded of God's compassion for us in Christ. We need to learn again of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. We need to humbly kneel before the cross and receive the forgiveness won by Christ and offered to all who repent. We need to live our lives in view of eternity revealed in Scripture.

I pray that you will never be isolated from Scripture and God's saving word.

Prayer: Almighty God, grant that we would desire the sincere milk of Your word. Through Your word of grace allow us to grow up to salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Tuesday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 3, 4

An angel clad in white they see,
Who sits and speaks unto the three,
“Your Lord will go to Galilee.”
Alleluia!

That night the apostles met in fear;
Among them came their master dear
And said, “My peace be with you here.”
Alleluia!

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L Christ is Risen!

C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

C Amen.

L Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

C Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

(Romans 6:9; John 20:29b)

Collect of the Day

L 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.

C Amen

In the Gospel Lesson for this week, we see Thomas express his doubt about the resurrection. I am sure that we can all resonate with that since we daily live with doubters of all sizes and shapes. This doubt is so pervasive that in some corners it has even infected the church. I recall from my seminary days (and it has only gotten worse in some seminaries and denominations) that some “brilliant” theologians were asked, “Do you believe in the resurrection?” The response would be a resounding “YES!” Unfortunately, when pressed further with this question, “Do you believe that Jesus' body was raised from the dead on the first Easter?” the response was not so unequivocal. Various clever answers would be given. They all boiled down to this general answer, “Yes, I believe in the resurrection. However, that does not mean that Jesus' body rose from the dead. Rather, it means that Jesus' ideas are so powerful that they cannot die. Therefore the early church invented the myth of the

resurrection so that his ideas would live on until today.”

Of course, this is extremely sad but understandable. Doubt is easy. Believing is difficult. It is so difficult that neither Thomas nor anyone else could believe without God giving the gift of faith. For us who have faith, we should rejoice and thank God daily for the wonderful knowledge that because Jesus lives, we too shall not die but live.

The Collect of the Day for this week reminds us of something else. We should not stop with thanking and rejoicing. We should move on to confessing and telling. When Thomas saw Jesus, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” May that ever be our confession of faith as well. As the collect says, may we make this confession with our life and conversation so that others may stop doubting and believe.

Prayer: Almighty God, we live in a world of doubt and uncertainty. There are many who desire to believe but find it difficult. Grant that in this time of national distress that we may clearly confess our faith in Jesus resurrection with our lives and conversation 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.

Wednesday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 5, 6

When Thomas first the tidings heard
That they had seen the risen Lord,
He doubted the disciples’ word.
Alleluia!

“My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,
And look upon My hands, My feet;
Not faithless but believing be.”
Alleluia!

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L Christ is Risen!
C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

L Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
C Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

(Romans 6:9; John 20:29b)

Psalm 148

L ¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
C ² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!
L ³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!
C ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!
L ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created.
C ⁶ And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.
L ⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps,
C ⁸ fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word!

- L** ⁹ Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
- C** ¹⁰ **Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds!**
- L** ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!
- C** ¹² **Young men and maidens together, old men and children!**
- L** ¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.
- C** ¹⁴ **He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.
Praise the Lord!
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.**

“Allelu, Allelu, Allelu, Alleluia! Praise ye the Lord!” is a song I sang with youth groups and Vacation Bible School Children. It may seem a bit trite to the sophisticated but it could be seen simply as a summary of Psalm 148, the psalm appointed for this second week of Easter.

Alleluia is the Easter word. For many years when I served as pastor, Christ Lutheran Church had an astounding Easter banner that extended floor to ceiling boldly proclaiming with great Easter Joy: ALLELUIA. We even called it the “Alleluia Banner.”

After the Lenten fast of not singing or saying, “Alleluia,” it seems breathtakingly wonderful to sing, say, shout, and proclaim, “Praise the Lord!” (The English translation of the Hebrew word, Halleluia.)

Psalm 148 takes “Alleluia-Praise the Lord” to the next level altogether. Read it again. Look at everyone and everything that praises God. **Young men and maidens, old men and children! Kings and princes!** No wonder this psalm is chosen for the Easter season. And no one has a greater reason to praise Him than the Christian people who have been saved from sin, death, and the devil! May our Easter praises resound more loudly this year when we remember that in Christ God has defeated all disease with the gift of eternal life. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Almighty God, by the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, You destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light. Grant that we, who have been raised with Him, may abide in His presence and rejoice with alleluias in the assurance of eternal glory; let us never become dismayed with the uncertain details of life here on earth through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thursday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 7

No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
“You are my Lord and God!” he cried.
Alleluia!

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- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.**

Acts 5:29–42

²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

³³When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.

³⁶For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, ⁴⁰and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

News reports lately have been saturated with protests over one policy or another. Watching reporting on protests brings back many memories of earlier days. On several occasions, I have had firsthand knowledge of events that have made the news, some at the national level. So I am not surprised at the mischaracterization the present protests are receiving in the national media. Whatever you may think of the protests, I am thankful that we live in a country where we are allowed to express our beliefs even if they are contrary to popular opinion or those in authority.

In my personal devotions today, I listened to the entire book of First Peter. You may be surprised at Peter’s words, “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.” (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Peter along with Paul directs us to obey governing authorities. There certainly may have been things required by the government of their day that Peter and Paul found disagreeable. Nevertheless, they urged all Christians to be obedient to the government for the “Lord’s sake.” We may not want to hear those words but we must. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced many regulations that were difficult and bothersome. Yet as Christians, we were obligated to be obedient, for the Lord’s sake!

Are there no exceptions? There certainly are. The reading from Acts for the second week of Easter begins with Peter’s words, “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” (Acts 5:29–32). These words of Peter are in response to the High Priest who said, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” (Acts 5:28).

Whenever we are forbidden to speak of Jesus and his death and resurrection, we must obey God rather than man. Whenever we are required to sin, we must obey God rather than man.

We thank God in times like this for the leadership provided by our national, state, and local governments. They make rules and regulations for our benefit. The Bible tells us to obey them for the Lord’s sake. Still, we must always speak of Jesus when it is popular or unpopular, commanded or forbidden. We must obey God rather than man.

Prayer: Almighty God, You granted to Peter and the Apostles the privilege of witnessing the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. You tasked them with the honor of telling your plan of salvation to a lost and condemned world. Their commitment was so great that they chose to obey God rather than man. May you grant to us such faith and commitment through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 8

How blest are they who have not seen
And yet whose faith has constant been,
For they eternal life shall win.

Alleluia!

Public domain

L Christ is Risen!

C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

C Amen.

L Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

C Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

(Romans 6:9; John 20:29b)

1 Peter 1:3–9

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Today we meet Peter yet again in the Epistle Lesson for the second week of Easter. Just as in all the other lessons of the week, there is more here than we could hope to digest in a single day. This is a magnificent portion of Peter's epistle. It speaks of our living hope, our inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading because of Jesus' resurrection. If we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus, how much more did Peter? He was brazen and impetuous in his declaration of faith, but he denied Jesus three times before early Good Friday rooster crowing.

Still, after the resurrection, he was brought back from the brink of destruction by the compassion of his Savior Jesus. Indeed, Peter did rejoice! He was snatched from death to life. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. We are obtaining the outcome of faith, the salvation of our souls.

But Peter also knew what we are all too aware of, until then we are being grieved by all sorts of trials. Current difficulties may be testing your faith with fire but have no fear, your salvation is won. We, with Peter and all the saints, have inexpressible joy! Our salvation is sure!

Prayer: Almighty God, in Jesus you grant to us the salvation of our souls. Let us never grow weary of rejoicing in this great gift. During times of trial and dismay strengthen our faith, increase our love and hope, and fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Saturday

O Sons and Daughters of the King – 9

On this most holy day of days
Be laud and jubilee and praise:
To God your hearts and voices raise.
Alleluia!

Public domain

L Christ is Risen!
C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

L Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

C Alleluia Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia.

(Romans 6:9; John 20:29b)

Gradual

L Christ has risen from the dead.
C God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,
L He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
C he has put all things under his feet.

(adapt. from Matt. 28:7; Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:6)

I never get tired of hearing the words of the Easter Gradual: Christ has risen from the dead!

Life can get tedious. Is there any real purpose to life? We may sometimes feel that life is what the hymn writer Martin Franzmann characterized as “an aimless mote.”

Indeed, life without Christ and the resurrection is ultimately a meaningless, “here today, gone tomorrow affair.” But since Christ has risen from the dead, life has meaning. We find our reality in Him who made us His own for all eternity. This fleeting world will one day pass away, but God and His word endure forever. We look forward to the day when all social isolation will end and we will join with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven singing His praises forever more.

"O God, O Lord of heav'n and earth, Thy living finger never wrote That life should be an aimless mote, A deathward drift from futile birth. Thy Word meant life triumphant hurled In splendor through Thy broken world. Since light awoke and life began, Thou hast desired Thy life for man."

(Lutheran Service Book, 834, stanza 1)

Christ has risen from the dead!

Prayer: Almighty God, our life on earth at times can feel tedious and meaningless. Grant that we may continually focus our lives on Jesus and the meaning He gives to us through His resurrection. Let us not grow discouraged and downcast, rather give us the joy of salvation through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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