



Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Easter III **April 14, 2024**

Christ is Risen! **He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!**

Prayer of the Day

Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson: Acts 3:12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Second Lesson: 1 John 3:1-7

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 24:36b-48

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his

feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

Homily – Rev. Jim Goos

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen (Psalm 19:14)

Our Second Reading (1 John 3:1-7) deals with an important point: through our faith in Jesus, we become God's children, and also become pure, as Jesus is pure.

The fact that each of us is God's child is fairly simple – we teach that as part of being baptized. In Baptism, God adopts us as His child and we become part of the church, the body of Christ. In this congregation, we are a family, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

We are also taught that in Baptism our sinful nature, our Old Adam is drowned, put to death, and in its place, we receive our new nature, the nature of Christ.

Our Second Reading doesn't use those words, but it does say that everyone who sins is guilty of lawlessness – and that is literally everyone. Jesus is the only one who has ever lived and walked on the face of this earth and never committed a single sin. All the rest of us are born with a sinful nature and are guilty of sin.

That's the bad news. The good news is that Jesus was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. Jesus was sinless, and therefore by willingly giving His life on the cross, His death paid the price of our sin, and through our faith in Him our relationship with God is restored, our sin is forgiven, and we can receive eternal salvation.

That is the Easter message, and it is the best news we will ever hear. However, it is not the end of our life story, it is just the beginning. Being baptized, along with hearing and believing that good news marks the beginning of our being born again and becoming God's child.

Then we are ready to begin a life-long process of sanctification. Our Reading reduces that life-long journey to two sentences: "No one who abides in Jesus sins" and "Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous."

The second sentence is pretty obvious: if we do what is right, we will be righteous. The problem is that none of us can actually do that.

If we look at the Ten Commandments, we might be able to pat ourselves on the back for not having killed someone, or stolen anything. But then we hear Jesus' words in the sermon on the mount: "you have heard it said, 'Do not kill.' I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother or sister is guilty of judgment."

It is not difficult for me to avoid actually killing someone, but I need a change in my heart to avoid being angry with my siblings, spouse or children. I can't accomplish that change on my own. I need help.

Realizing that I need help is the beginning of that process of sanctification. I hear and believe the good news that I highlighted earlier. I hear that good news, believe it, and invite Jesus to come into my heart, forgive my sin and change me into a new person, one who is sinless, pure, righteous as Jesus is.

Then I am delighted to hear the second sentence that "no one who abides in Jesus sins." You may be familiar with the beginning of our Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is actually a quote of 1 John 1:8-9.

So, it is clear that St. John recognizes that we are never totally free from sin, and if we ever think that, we deceive ourselves. What John is doing in this Reading is pointing us to our goal: being pure, sinless and righteous as Jesus is pure, sinless and righteous.

Being baptized, hearing and believing the Easter good news and inviting Jesus into our hearts and lives begins the process of being sanctified, becoming like Jesus.

That process continues for the rest of our lives. We may not notice a huge change from one day to the next, but from one year to the next, or for many of us, from one decade to the next there should be some noticeable changes.

There are a few steps that help. Most important is taking the time to get to know God, especially learning to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who transforms us and enables us to become more and more like Jesus.

If we are not aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and working in our life, we are left pretty much on our own. And that tends not to work well at putting self to death and becoming more like Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit in order to make significant change.

Developing a relationship takes time and effort – regularly reading our Bible enables us to get to know God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If you are starting out, try a translation like The Message that uses everyday language and is easier to understand.

As you read, invite the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you are reading. Also take some time to sit quietly in God's presence. Just focus on Him; listen for the Holy Spirit to speak to you, especially as you reflect on a word or phrase from your Bible reading.

Or be really daring and ask God if there is anything He would like to say to you. Be willing to wait for an answer. Note any thoughts that pop into your head, especially if that thought doesn't seem to be your own thought or wish.

Sanctification, transformation is a lifelong process, not an instant, all-at-once complete change. I would prefer the instant, all-at-once change, but that would require God to force me to change. God has given me, and all of us, free will and He respects that. He doesn't force us to change. He waits until we are ready and willing.

God makes us aware of the presence of sin and encourages us to repent, invite the Holy Spirit to put that sin to death and instead of committing that same sin over and over, learn a new behaviour, which is choosing to follow the example of Jesus and become more like him.

Gradually, over time, we are less and less the sinful person we used to be, and more and more like Jesus: more loving, more patient, more kind, more gentle, more self-controlled, etc., and moving closer towards our goal of having no sin.

We will not completely reach that goal in this life, but we can continue to make progress.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

O God our holy one, you feed our deepest hungers. As we share the holy meal that is the body and blood of Jesus given for us, lead us to share all that we have, and find, in generosity, abundant life. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God our creator, you bring forth all life on earth. Calm storms, bring water to parched places, and protect the climate, that this planet would sustain life in all its variety. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God our savior, you offer wisdom and guidance beyond all human knowledge. Instruct lawmakers, judges, and elected officials to make decisions grounded in your justice and care for all people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God our elder, you care for all your children. Encourage those who are in times of transition, facing the loss of old ways and routines and anticipating change. Guide those who journey in grief, hope, and uncertainty *especially: Fran, Russel, Darry, Neil, Diana, Erva, Lila, Irlavere, Constance, Bobby, Adele, Elizabeth, Tracy, Norma, Christa, Anne and for those we name aloud or in our hearts (Long pause for private prayers).* God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God our center, you bring all people together in you. Help us to remember our identity and purpose in our ministry. Move us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to share in beloved community. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O God our resting place, your Son Jesus promised that we are held in your love forever. We remember our beloved who have died. As we remember and share their love, comfort those who mourn. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us.....

Lord's Prayer

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.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Go in peace.
Rejoice and be glad.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Prayers used by permission by Augsburg Fortress – Sundays and Seasons

STTLC Communiqué

Lenten Personal Products Drive has come to an end with 2955 items delivered to the Food Bank. With these donations we have helped those in need. Thank you for being in mission for others.

The Syrian Refugee families, sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Petawawa and the Community of Petawawa are soon arriving. They are in need of all items to furnish a home. If you are able to assist in any way, please contact Jennifer Neville 613-639-4264. The need is great. Thank you for your support.

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

