

Exegetical Notes for the Lay Preachers' Bulletin:

April 2020 – Year A

Palm Sunday (Proper BAS p 297) – April 5

Liturgy of the Passion: Matthew 27:11-54

- This Sunday provides a wonderful opportunity to explore a dramatic reading of the Gospel. A dramatic reading could take the place normally given to the Gospel Reading and Sermon. A time of silent reflection could follow before reciting the creed.
- “Crucify Him!” No distinction should be made between those who cry “Hosanna” and those who cry “Crucify!” We should not look down on those who called for Jesus crucifixion, claiming that we would have done something different. Just as we hear our own voice calling for salvation (“hosanna”), how do we hear our own voice calling for Christ’s death?
- Offered Jesus wine to drink: A rabbinic tradition indicates that when a prisoner was led out to execution he was given a goblet of wine containing frankincense to drink (numbing the senses). See parallels here with the visit of the magi, and the fulfillment of Psalm 69:20-21.
- An important element of this passage is the physicality of Christ’s journey to the cross. Matthew describes this scene matter-of-factly. It is filled with sensations. Voices are heard, flogging is felt, wine is drunk, mockery is seen, nails pierce flesh. What does it mean for you that Jesus physically experiences the pain and hardship of life? Can I affirm that Jesus physically experiences the nuances of my own life?

Easter Sunday (Proper BAS p 335) – April 12

Matthew 28:1-10

- “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb” This is consistent with Jewish burial practices. The women to finalize the bodily preparation for burial. This would not have been done prior to placement in the tomb due to the Sabbath.
- “Rolled back the stone.” Why was the stone rolled away? The resurrected Jesus could clearly appear/disappear at whim. Was the stone rolled way to let Jesus out, or to let us in? How might we look more clearly into the empty tomb in order to uncover the risen Lord in our life?
- “Go quickly.” The women are commanded to take the news of Jesus and share it with the disciples. When Jesus appears to the women, he reiterates the message to “go and tell”. How does the resurrection of Jesus call us to “go and tell”? How can we share this wonderful news to our neighbours?

Easter 2 (Proper BAS p 336) – April 19

John 20:19-31

- “On the evening of the first day of the week” We read this one week after Easter – however it is important to remember that this is still “resurrection day.” See John 20:1
- “For fear of the Jews”. Prior to news about Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples were characterized by fear and hiding. They believed the authorities would arrest them as well.
- “A week later . . .” Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared on Easter day. However, this does not mean he left the community. Although he had yet to have an experience of the risen Jesus, he

remained with the disciples. We can assume Thomas asked questions, listened to their experiences, prayed along with the disciples, and continued to worship with them. When we have doubts, perhaps we are called to journey with the community of faith

- Notice the parallel between what Thomas requests and what the disciples experience. Thomas only asks to have a similar experience as the other disciples. What experience of the risen Jesus are you longing for in your life?

Easter 3 (Proper BAS p 337) – April 26

Luke 24:13-35

- “Now that same day” We read this one week after Easter – however it is important to remember that this is still “resurrection day.” See Luke 24:1
- “Did not the Christ have to suffer.” This is a surprising revelation, as Jews did not expect the Messiah to be a suffering figure.
- “Beginning with the Law and the Prophets.” See passages such as Genesis 3:15 Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalms 2; 16; 22; 118; Isaiah 50:4-9, 52:13-15:1
- “Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it . . .and their eyes were opened.” There are several instances in Scripture where Jesus does this action. We see this in the feeding of the 5000, the Last Supper, and now here. These are places where the fullness of Jesus identity as Lord and Saviour is revealed. If you are having Eucharist, reflect on the meaning of the eucharist. How do we receive a deeper revelation of Jesus as our Lord? Do we pray that our eyes will be open so that we may recognise him?
- “They got up and at once returned to Jerusalem.” Their experience of the risen Jesus was not a private affair but one they had to share. How can you share what you experience Christ do in your life?