

Easter Exordium

He is Risen!

Are there any who are devout lovers of God?

Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival!

Are there any who are grateful servants?

Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!

You that have kept the fast, and you that have not,

rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!

Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;

for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.

He has destroyed it by enduring it.

He destroyed Hell when He descended into it.

He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh.

Hell took a body, and discovered God.

It took earth, and encountered Heaven.

It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.

O death, where is thy sting?

O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!

Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!

Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;

for Christ having risen from the dead,

is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!

Rise and Rejoice with me as we sing our Exordium Hymn:

#348 - He is Arisen! Glorious Word

The Easter sermon of John Chrysostom (circa 400 AD) *(alt.)*

Rejoice! What God Says Is True.

Our text for meditation today is...

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. See, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples. ^(ESV)

These are Your Words, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. ^(John 17:17)

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Repetitio mater studiorum est. Repetition is the mother of learning.

That saying is so old, it's even in Latin. *Repetitio mater studiorum est.*

This is nothing new in the Lutheran Church.

Martin Luther's Small Catechism instruction is based on repetition.

It gives simple, brief explanations to simple questions that can easily be repeated at the dinner table, at bedtime, on the way to work, and *even* in Confirmation class.

We use the liturgies of the historic Church, with their Ordinaries (you know, those parts that we sing almost every week, like:

the *Kyrie Eleison - Lord, have mercy;*

and the *Agnus Dei - Lamb of God*),

This weekly repetition makes it possible for the young illiterates to participate alongside their parents, and cherish these treasures throughout their lives.

Some people look at these repeated elements in our Catechism instruction

and the Divine Service and they criticize it as being too repetitive, and therefore, boring.

They consider it to be a waste of time; that we could be learning more new things, but instead we are stuck with these old things, over and over.

Sure, we may hear something new every week, even on Easter,

but is it truly learned if you can't remember it by the next Easter? Or the next Sunday?

And is it the new things that are the foundation of the faith?

Or is it the old, even, ancient things that have been taught since Christ's resurrection?

But as they say, *Repetitio mater studiorum est.* Repetition is the mother of learning.

But even repetition takes time to sink in.

You don't always pick up on everything right away.

In fact, it often is that the repeated elements of instruction, though seeming simple,

offer opportunity for the deepest meditation.

So hearing & saying things often, aside from drilling it into your permanent memory, also gives you more opportunity to reflect and meditate on them.

And when you learn something new regarding that oft repeated word,

you have that “*Eureka!*” moment of great joy when it all seems to make sense,

and gives credence for why our spiritual fathers have thought it worth repeating.

This is what we see happening in our text. It is the start of the women’s “*Eureka!* moment.”

The angel announced to the women, “**He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.**”

While it is understandable why they were surprised to see the angel in the tomb,

if they had listened to Jesus and concerned themselves with what He repeated,

they would not have been surprised that Jesus was risen from the dead.

He had told them of His resurrection and had repeated it numerous times.

In the Gospel of Matthew, no less than 3 times, Jesus told them directly

that He would **be killed, and on the third day be raised.** Matthew 16:21; 17:22; 20:18-19

On 2 separate occasions, He gave them the sign of Jonah,

Matthew 12:38-40; 16:3-5

that as Jonah was 3 days in the belly of the fish, He would be in the belly of the earth.

And John records Jesus’ statement, “**Destroy this temple, and in 3 days I will raise it up.**”

John 2:19

The funny thing was that Jesus’ enemies understood Him well enough.

That was why the guards were there, to make sure nobody stole the body and said that Jesus was raised from the dead.

But for Jesus’ disciples, it took the actual resurrection for them to understand Him;

and the angel would provide them an opportunity to recall Jesus’ words,

to take those oft repeated words to heart, and to find comfort in them,

“**He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.**”

After watching Jesus suffer excruciating pain for all those hours...

After hearing Him cry out, “**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**” ...

After seeing the soldier thrust the spear into His side and He didn’t flinch...

and what was left of His blood and some water, just flowed out of Him...

After seeing Him buried in a cold, lifeless tomb with no medical attention for 3 days...

Could this be possible?... “**He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.**”

But Jesus’ Words are not just ordinary words.

They are the Words of God, and so they are **living and active** Words. Hebrews 4:12

They do what they say: like when He said, “**Let there be light,**” and **there was light.** Genesis 1:3

Or when He said, “**Young man, I say to you, arise.**” And the widow’s son did. Luke 7:14

Or when He said, “**Child, arise.**” And Jairus’ daughter did. Luke 8:54

Or when He said, “**Lazarus, come out.**” And there Lazarus came. John 11:43

And if His Word had that kind of power when He spoke just once,

what do you suppose its power is when He says something numerous times?

Well, you don’t have to suppose, because that is what our text is all about.

His Word is so powerful, He can even call Himself back to life.

...

But Jesus doesn't use His Word just to impress you with His power.

How much more impressive was Mt. Sinai when Israel received the 10 Commandments? Instead, He gives you His Word to impress upon you His grace and to comfort you, as He did with His disciples.

He told them frequently ahead of time so that they wouldn't despair when it happened. He told them afterward, like on the Road to Emmaus, so they would truly understand His Word, the O.T. and have that "Eureka! moment" of great joy.

And He continued to repeat the message of His crucifixion and resurrection through the preaching of the Apostles in the Book of Acts and the Epistles.

So now, let's return to that idea of repetition, because God seems to use it for a reason.

After all, *Repetitio mater studiorum est.*

If Jesus thinks something like His death and resurrection is important enough to repeat, then don't you think they're important enough for you to listen to more than once? You do, because you're here once again this Sunday and this Easter.

If you just liked singing "Alleluia," you could come almost any Sunday to sing that word (which tells you something about our purpose in gathering every Sunday, doesn't it?). But you are here for another reason.

You are here because you want to hear Jesus repeat to you, not only His story, but yours. You want to hear Him tell you that you will rise from the dead, too, some day.

And so you have.

Whenever you hear God's servant declare onto you the forgiveness of your sins, you are washed once again in His blood, baptized into His death, and raised to life again. He speaks life into your dying body and consecrates it for eternal resurrection.

Is it a wonder then that after the Pastor forgives you each week, as [Jesus] said, and after we respond with the *Kyrie Eleison*, ♪ *Lord, Have Mercy*, asking Him yet for more mercy in our daily lives, we then repeat our hymn of praise, the *Gloria In Excelsis Deo*, ♪ *Glory be to God on high*. (Wasn't that so nice to sing again after 6 weeks without it?)

In just a few moments, you will hear Christ speak to you again, to comfort you, "**This is My body, This is My blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.**" The comfort here isn't that these are familiar words, but what these words say and give, His crucified AND RISEN body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins.

As the angel announced, Jesus was not there in the tomb, **for He has risen, as He said.** But He is here (Bapt.Font), here (Pulpit), and here (Altar), **for His has risen, as He said.** "**See, I have told you.**"

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.
Soli Deo Gloria*