

Third Sunday of Easter  
Sunday, May 4, 2025

### **Introduction to the day**

The disciples make a big splash and eat breakfast with the risen Jesus. Wading in the water (remembering baptism) and eating with Jesus (celebrating holy communion) is our weekly encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus asks us again and again: Do you love me? And Jesus invites us, again and again, to follow him, bringing the Easter life to others.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Eternal and all-merciful God, with all the angels and all the saints we laud your majesty and might. By the resurrection of your Son, show yourself to us and inspire us to follow Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **FIRST READING: Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]**

A reading from Acts.

*Saul (later called Paul) was an ardent persecutor of all who followed the Way of Christ. This reading recounts the story of his transformation beginning with an encounter with Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus.*

### **PSALM: Psalm 30**

You have turned my wailing into dancing. (Ps. 30:11)

### **SECOND READING: Revelation 5:11-14**

A reading from Revelation.

*The vision of John recorded in Revelation offers a glimpse of cosmic worship around the throne. At its center is "the Lamb who was slain."*

### **GOSPEL: John 21:1-19**

The holy gospel according to John.

*The risen Christ appears again to his disciples by the sea where they were first called. After echoes of the fishing and feeding miracles, he gives a final reminder of the cost of a disciple's love and obedience.*

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER - Grace upon Grace**

The risen Christ is difficult to recognize at first. According to today's gospel reading from John, even as he approached his disciples on the beach, they "did not know that it was Jesus" (John 21:4). Neither did Mary Magdalene recognize him outside the tomb on Easter morning. She assumed he was the gardener (20:14-15). Apparently, resurrection changes Jesus to the extent that he appears a stranger even to his closest friends.

That is, until he makes himself known to them again. In Mary's case, he simply speaks her name. "Rabbouni! Teacher!" she replies, newly hopeful as she carries the good news to the others (20:16-18). For the disciples in the fishing boat, it is a miraculous catch that brings Jesus' identity to light. "It is the Lord!" the beloved disciple says to Peter, who promptly dives overboard to reach Jesus on the shore (21:7).

As the story draws to a close, Jesus returns to his disciples with signs that he will continue to be with them. He calls them by name, feeds them with abundance, and invites them again into lives of purpose: "Do you love me? . . . Feed my sheep" (21:17). In this way, the end of the Gospel of John recalls the beginning. Jesus, crucified and risen, continues to grant his followers "grace upon grace" (1:16).

Moreover, the end of John signals the beginning of Jesus' ministry alongside disciples through the ages. The risen Jesus is a mystery to us too. We may not readily recognize him in the course of daily life. Yet even as he is hidden from view, he is also revealed. In baptism, he calls us by name. At his table, he feeds us with abundance. At the doorways of our gathering places, he invites us again and again into lives of purpose. Grace upon grace.

Christ is risen indeed. Come, follow him!

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

God of resurrection and new life, we come before you in prayer for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Your love sustains the church and its ministries. By that love, equip youth directors, Sunday school teachers, and all who guide formation in the church to nurture vibrant, living faith among your people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your abundance is made known throughout creation. Preserve oceans and rivers, lakes and estuaries so that all creatures living in them might flourish. Make us wise stewards of our local watersheds. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your wisdom guides all who strive for justice and peace. Strengthen the work of grassroots organizers, especially among communities on the frontlines of justice work. Amplify the voices of those most in need, that their leadership guides the way forward. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your compassion surrounds all who are in need. We pray for all people experiencing poverty and food insecurity, and for all struggling with debt and economic uncertainty. Reassure all who experience hopelessness or need your tender care especially Linda Boland, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts those who need you healing touch. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You invite all people to your table of grace. Make this a community of radical hospitality where all feel loved and celebrated. Show us how to better welcome visitors and bless the ministries of hospitality in this place. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We praise you for the witness of your saints of all times and places. May their lives of faith guide us in our own journeys with you, today and every day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

### **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 115)**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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