



Easter Sunday

Raquette Lake Chapel

March 31, 2024



“When the sabbath was over...” [Mark 16:1-20]



When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.

Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” But when they

looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. “Don't be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.



Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

What if...

"What if there were no Easter, no crucifixion, no resurrection?" These questions cut to the heart of the core beliefs of Christianity and lay the foundation of "The Good News."

Without Easter, the Christian faith would crumble, leaving behind a void, a want for hope, redemption, and eternal life. The absence of the crucifixion and resurrection would mean the absence of salvation itself—a fundamental concept central to Christian doctrine.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ stands as a action revealing the depth of God's love for humanity. Through his sacrificial death on the cross, Jesus bore the weight of sin and offered the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation with God (*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16). Without the crucifixion, there would be no atonement for sin, and humanity would remain eternally separated from God with no path for redemption.

The Jesus's resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian hope (*"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."* 1 Corinthians 15:14). Jesus Christ triumphed over death, demonstrating God's power to conquer sin and grant eternal life to those who believe in Him. Without the resurrection, the Christian faith would lose its cornerstone, and believers would be left without the assurance of life beyond the grave.

The absence of Easter, lacking the crucifixion and resurrection, would leave humanity in a state of despair, grappling with the ultimate questions of existence without the promise of redemption. It would strip away the transformative power of God's grace, leaving individuals without the hope of reconciliation with God.

On this momentous Easter day we are asked "Have you heard the Good News?" and our answer is "Yes! He is Risen!" The reality of Easter establishes the central beliefs of Christianity—faith, hope, and love—as embodied in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – and that, simply, is the Gospel, the "Good News."

What is "the Gospel"? (A look to the future...)

As Christians, we often speak of "the Gospel," but what exactly does this term entail? At its core, the Gospel is the central message of Christianity—the good news about Jesus Christ. One basic meaning of "the Gospel" is: the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to bring peace and forgiveness to all who believe in him. The Gospel is a message of hope, redemption, and eternal significance that has the power to transform lives. To grasp the full depth of the Gospel, let's explore some key concepts that are integral to its understanding. Beginning next week via "Sunday Blasts" and into the Chapel's summer sermons, we will dive into the question "what is the Gospel" together. Stay tuned! - Vance

Prayer box - pray for: comfort of Kathy's, Joel's and Michael's grieving families; for healing for Fr. Andy, Debbie, Joe, Elizabeth, and Rich; for people suffering from depression; for Peace in Ukraine and the Middle East. ***Lord Hear Our Prayer!***

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
May you have a blessed Easter!