

Easter Day - 4/5/2015 *Text: Mark 16:1–20*

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! *"He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"*

In the Name of the Father and of + the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The resurrection of Jesus is not surprising. Seriously, it's really not, for two very important reasons:

1) Jesus told everybody about it. Mark describes it thus: **"And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly."** (Mark 8:31–32a) He said this plainly, as in there was no mistaking what Jesus taught. No confusion. And, especially once everything else took place – rejection, suffering, death; we're just checking things off the list – then the resurrection follows.

Jesus does not lie. He's not pulling a fast one over on anybody. What He says is true.

For more evidence of the clarity of Jesus' promise that He would be raised from the dead on the third day, consider the Gospel reading for yesterday, Holy Saturday: **"The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he**

was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.'" Jesus made a promise so plain that even those who put him to death knew exactly what that promise was.

So reason number one - Jesus hid it from no one. He spoke plainly that He would die and be raised.

2) What else is going to happen when the One who is without sin dies?

Now the only reason death is in the world is because of Sin. From the Garden of Eden on, people die. We die because we are corrupted by Sin from conception, and our lives are marked by an ongoing ability to learn new and ever-more-interesting ways to act on our sinfulness.

But not Jesus. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He's a man like you, but unlike you He is without Sin.

So He cannot die; or at least, He cannot stay dead.

Though Jesus *had* to die. Again, because He cannot lie. And He said, from the beginning, that the Christ - the Son of Man - would pay for the sins of the world.

So He died. But He did not stay dead.

But meh. Unsurprising. He's just doing what He said He'd do.

What *is* surprising, shocking even, is what we witnessed just a little while ago. Little Oliver - full of Sin - was resurrected. Little Oliver was made alive.

Oliver can die. He deserves it. So do you and I. What is surprising, amazing, wonderful, is that Jesus loved us enough to die and rise again so that He can make His death and resurrection *yours*.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Oliver by baptism was buried therefore with Christ into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, he too might walk in newness of life.

And the same goes for you, dear friends. The miracle of Easter is not that Jesus is risen. That's second nature to the man who is also God.

The miracle of Easter is that the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection - namely, forgiveness of your sins; a putting away of your old sinful nature; a new clean heart that loves God and praises Him day and night; a new will that hears God's Commandments and gladly says, "Yes, Lord, I will gladly live that way"; a life that is filled with faith in Christ's promises; a body that though it grows weak and succumbs to the ravages of this Sin-broken world will be raised again glorified, just as Christ was; a hope-filled trust that on the Last Day Christ will return and will welcome you into

His eternal kingdom, where you will see him with your own eyes, and not another – the miracle of Easter is that these fruits of Christ’s death and resurrection are entirely your own. You have them. They are yours. In your baptism.

And they’re Oliver’s, too. And we witnessed it happening.

And it didn’t look all that spectacular or interesting, did it?

But it was. Because Jesus promised it. He does not lie. He spoke plainly of His death and resurrection, and He speaks plainly of His gift to you.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”

Baptism brings the reality of Good Friday and Easter into your life. Not just the day, not some abstract concept or idea, not just a feeling, but the *reality*. Christ’s death and resurrection are now *your* death and resurrection; to be fulfilled in time, but already totally and perfectly complete.

“Do not be alarmed” the messenger at the tomb said. That is, don’t get all worked up; don’t freak out. And why? **“He has risen; he is not here... just as he told you.”**

The surprise of Easter is that Jesus doesn’t have to make a big show of it. He just tells us how things are. But what those things are, *that* is amazing. The death and resurrection of Jesus, now your very own: given in plain

words spoken to each other; given in plain words spoken while water is poured; given in plains words spoken over bread and wine that are then consumed by Christ's Church.

Now if you want to be amazed by that, be my guest. I certainly am. I cannot begin to fathom the mystery of it all. That is what is miraculous and amazing about Easter.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! *"He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"*

Amen.

- *Pastor Michael Schuermann S.D.G.*