

Greater Hartford Conference, New England Synod, ELCA
 Pericope Study for Sunday, April 8, 2012 – “Resurrection of Our Lord” aka “Easter 1B” aka “Easter”
 Presented Tue 4/3/12 by Richard Burgess

Introductory Note: I am assuming that virtually all of us will be preaching on one of the Easter Gospels this week. Therefore I am focusing entirely on the two Gospel lessons appointed for this year, Mark and the alternate from John. While John is an alternate for all three years of the RCL, this year is the year of both Mark and John and I see no compelling reason to prefer one over the other. Also, as far as I can tell, neither Prayer of the Day is linked with a particular Gospel lesson.

| Collect / Prayer of the Day (ELW) | Collect / Prayer of the Day (ELW) (Alternate) |
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| O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. | God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. |

Some General Thought Questions on the Easter Gospel Lessons:

- What “really” happened at Easter?
 - Historically?
 - Theologically?
 - What are the pastoral implications?
- How is Jesus active in these lessons:
 - Overtly?
 - Implied?
 - Not?
- How are the empty tomb and resurrection relevant to us?
 - As eschatological hope?
 - As present reality?
 - For those who are approaching death or grieving the death of a loved one?
 - What do the empty tomb and resurrection require of us?
- The accounts of Jesus’ ministry focus heavily on the twelve disciples, who are all men. Yet, in all four gospels Mary Magdalene (and in the synoptics along with other women) first discovered the empty tomb. What is the significance of this?
- What do the empty tomb and the resurrection have to do with Easter of the secular world – chocolate bunnies, candy eggs, flowers, ham dinners, etc? Is it possible claim Easter for the Church by co-opting (or in some cases re-opting) these secular customs?

Easter Accounts in the Four Gospels:

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|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Empty Tomb: | Mt 28.1-8 | Mk 16.1-8 | Lk 24.1-12 | Jn 20.1-10 |
| Risen Christ: | Mt 28.9-10 | (Mk 16.9-18) | Lk 24.13-49 | Jn 20.11-23 |

Gospel: Mark 16:1-8 (NRSV)

^{16.1}When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

One Possible Outline / Structure:
(Burgess)

- Mk 16.1-2 Sunday Morning: Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, & Salome go to the tomb
- Mk 16.3-4 At the Tomb: Large stone already rolled away
- Mk 16.5-7 Young Man at the Tomb: Jesus has been raised and is not here.
- Mk 16.8 Women flee in "terror and amazement"

Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

- Mk 16.1-8 Mark's Easter account is rather sparse. Why might this be? What is the value in the other three gospels expanding it significantly?
- Mk 16.3 *Who will roll away the stone . . . ?* Why did the women come to the tomb if they didn't know how they would get in?
- Mk 16.7 *he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him* Ie, no Jesus in Jerusalem on Easter. Clearly this is not so in Mt & Jn, sort of not so in Luke, and contradicted in Mk 16.9ff. Why does Jesus need to be in Galilee, not in Jerusalem? Or do we need him to be in Jerusalem?
- Mk 16.8 *terror and amazement . . . they were afraid* Why terror, amazement, and fear rather than joy, elation and thanksgiving?
- Mk 16.1-8 It seems to be more important that Jesus is not in the tomb than that he is still around. What is the significance of Jesus not being in / near the tomb?

Gospel (Alternate): John 20:1-18 (NRSV)

^{20.1}Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

One Possible Outline / Structure:
(Maloney, *Sacra Pagina: John*, p 517)

- Jn 20.1-10 Visits to the empty tomb
- Jn 20.1-2 Mary Magdalene establishes the emptiness of the tomb.
- Jn 20.3-10 Peter and the Beloved Disciple hasten to the tomb; the Beloved Disciple comes to faith but this is not the end of the journey of faith (cf .9).
- Jn 20.11-18 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene
- Jn 20.11-13 Mary Magdalene looks into the empty tomb but does not repeat the Beloved Disciple's experience of faith.
- Jn 20.14-18 The appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene leads her from no faith to a conditioned faith, until she finally accepts his command, returning to the disciples to announce: "I have seen the Lord" (.18).

Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

- Jn 20-1-18 Compare the responses at the empty tomb: Mary Magdalene, "the other disciple", and Simon Peter. In John "seeing" is often linked to faith; how is seeing related to faith here? There's a lot of running around; what does that mean?
- Jn 20.2 *the other disciple* Who is this? Why is he not named?
- Jn 20.4 *the other disciple outran Peter* Was this a "race"? Why is this in the Bible?
- Jn 20.7 Why are the wrappings from the head separate from those for the rest of the body? Why are they neatly rolled up?
- Jn 20.17 *Do not hold onto me . . .* Why does this matter? Compare to Jn 20.17 where Jesus allowed Thomas to touch him. (Though it never happened.) How does this relate to the idea that John is an anti-docetic / anti-gnostic gospel?