

11 April 2004  
The Resurrection of our Lord

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Vienna, VA

## Jesu Juva

“Each Day is now Easter Day”

Text: Luke 24:1-11

*(Thanks to the Rev. Chad Bird for some of the thoughts and phrases contained in this sermon.)*

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I woke up this morning, same time as usual. I put on the same slippers and robe. Made the same coffee in the same coffee maker. I turned on the radio and heard the same news as usual. The war in Iraq. Political posturing. Lead in the water. A traffic accident closed I-95 for a while. The same issues, the same problems, the same life. Perhaps it was the same for you. It was almost like this day was no different than any other day. . . . *Almost.*

It was like that, I think, for the two Marys, Joanna, and the other women who woke up this morning some 2000 years ago. Oh, it wasn't exactly the same, for they had a funeral to attend to, but this was a ritual they had attended to before. Toward the cemetery they drug their feet. Loaded down with the oils and spices and all the stuff they needed to put on the cold, stiff corpse. There was no undertaker to do the undertaking – it was up to them. These poor women. Their hope had been sucked out of them. Their hearts were sad and heavy. . . . They were like many today who wake up, day after day the same, with no hope, weighed down with problems, going to a job they really don't want to do.

But this morning turned out not to be what these women had expected. When they got to the tomb, the stone had been rolled away. There was no cold, stiff, corpse. And two men appear, in dazzling apparel. At first the women are afraid. Who are they, what are they doing here, and what do they want? Human nature assumes the worst. But then these men open their mouths and preach good news: ***“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”*** Women, save your oil and spices for another day! For another corpse! The Lord does not need them. This tomb is empty! He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

And so a day that started ordinary became much more. It became a day *unlike* any other day, and a day that has transformed all days. And it is why you are here, celebrating, today. Because what happened this day means that things will never be the same for you again.

Because what did happen this day? A dead man was raised to life again? Yes, but much more! **Today, sin has been overcome.** The One on whom all our sins were placed on Good Friday has now been raised from the dead. Therefore if the same God who condemned Jesus to death on the cross has now raised Him from the dead, it must mean that His sacrifice for your sins was perfect. Every single penny of debt you owe to God for your sins has been paid in full. You now owe nothing! The bill is paid. The check did not bounce. It is finished, your sin and condemnation. It is complete, your salvation. And you know it because God the Father has raised Jesus back to life.

What else happened this day? A dead man was raised to life again, but much more! **Today, death has been overcome.** The One who was declared guilty by the Father on Good Friday and died our death has now been raised from the dead. For He could not stay dead. He had to rise because His death paid the price for sin demanded by the Law. Jesus did not rise from the dead simply because He was too powerful to remain in the grave. He did not rise from the dead simply because He was God. Rather, Jesus rose from the dead because He took away the sin of the world, and where there is no sin, neither is there death. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there must also be life and salvation. Death has been overcome.

And what else happened this day? A dead man was raised to life again, but much more! **Today, the grave has been overcome.** The One placed into the tomb on Good Friday has now broken the seal of the grave. The victim has become the victor, and His resurrection is now your resurrection. All that separated you from God has now been conquered. And as Christ's very own body was raised after His death, so will your own body be raised after your death. We will not be angels. We will not be spirits. We will not be gods. You will be who you are, only perfected. You will know and be known. You will receive the goal of your faith – not just to die and go to heaven, but to be raised to a new life, body and soul, to live before God as He intended. As Adam and Eve once lived, in a Paradise restored.

And so this day is *unlike* any other day, and a day that has transformed all our days, so that no day will ever be the same again. For although we live in a world of sin, and death, and conflict; although many days seem the same, and we may seem to be in a rut; the *reality* of our lives is quite different. For we are living in a new day. The sin and

death of Good Friday is past, and the future that awaits us is a glorious one. And so each day, come what may, is an Easter Day. A day of resurrection, a day of forgiveness, a day of hope and confidence.

For yes, each day our sin rears its ugly head within us, *but in Christ each day is Easter Day*, and we are forgiven and raised to a new life.

And yes, each day death surrounds us and none of us knows whether this will be the day that an accident, or terrorism, or tragedy, or disease takes our life. *But in Christ each day is Easter Day*, and we know that death is done and that we will live.

And yes, each day the devil stretches out the grave before us and wants to convince us that our separation from God has not really been overcome at all, for it is too great. Your sin is too much. *But in Christ, each day is Easter Day*, and we know that the devil has been defeated. We have been reconciled to God. There is now nothing that separates us from love of God in Christ Jesus.

And so it was on that first Easter Day, when the women arrived at the tomb. ***“He is not here, but has risen.”*** At first, they thought that was bad news! But it really was good news. The bad news would have been if the angels had said to them, “Oh, you’re looking for Jesus? To anoint His body? Oh, here He is. Right over here. In this corner.” But no. ***“He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”***

And, we are told, they did remember. They remembered His words. He told them He would die, and He did. He told them He would rise, and He did. He told them He was the Son of God. He told them He was the Messiah, the Saviour. He told them, and it was true! They remembered all His words, and they knew they were true! His words of life, of hope, of forgiveness, of heaven, of peace – the empty tomb proves them all! This was a day unlike any day. A day that had changed everything. A day that had changed every day.

And so for you and I. I woke up this morning and my house said everything is the same. Everything in its place. The same ol’, same ol’. The radio told me that too. It was almost like this day was no different from any other day. *Almost*. But today everything has changed. Jesus Christ is Risen Today. I Know that My Redeemer Lives. Today **my** sin has been overcome. **My** death has died. **My** grave has been opened. Today is Easter Day! And you know what? Tomorrow will be too.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.