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March 30, 2024    †    Easter Vigil

## CONTRADICTION

How should Christians understand Scripture passages that seem to contradict reality? For example, King David said in Psalm 37:25, “I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread,” contrary to the experiences of numerous starving Christians throughout history and the world. David says elsewhere, prophesying the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, “By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me” (Psalm 41:11). The events of Good Friday seem to tell a different story, however. Did not our Lord’s enemies triumph over Him? For that matter, doesn’t the devil continue to persecute His Body, the Church? Undeniably! But the cross and the empty tomb are the contradiction that answers all other contradictions. Rejoice in God’s contradiction! For death is swallowed up by death; the Author of life has died and now is raised to restore all things!

+ SERVICE OF LIGHT +

### INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### INVITATION

- P** Beloved in the Lord, on this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death into life, we are gathered here in vigil and in prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord in which, by hearing His Word and celebrating His Sacraments, we share in His victory over death.

## COLLECT

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit enkindles the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. Bless, we implore You, this new flame and those who keep this joyful Easter festival that, burning with desire for life with You, we may be found rightly prepared to share in the Feast of Light that has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## BLESSING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

*The cross is traced on the paschal candle.*

**P** Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the ending,

*The Greek letters Alpha and Omega are traced on the paschal candle.*

**P** the Alpha and the Omega.

*The year is traced on the paschal candle.*

**P** His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever.

*Five wax nails are touched on the paschal candle.*

**P** By His wounds we have healing both now and forever. Amen.

*The paschal candle is lit.*

**P** May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds.

## COLLECT

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful God, pour out on us Your abundant blessing that all who in true faith share this night in joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be filled with Your heavenly benediction. Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the light, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

*All light their candles from the paschal candle and follow the candle bearer in procession into the darkened church.*

*The bearer of the paschal candle stops at the entrance to the nave. The congregation responds using the same melody as the officiant.*

### LUX CHRISTI

- A The light of Christ.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

*The bearer of the paschal candle stops in the middle of the nave.*

### LUX CHRISTI

- A The light of Christ.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

*When all have processed, the bearer of the paschal candle lifts the paschal candle high.*

### LUX CHRISTI

- A The light of Christ.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

### EXSULTET

- A Rejoice now, all you heavenly choirs of angels; rejoice now, all creation; sound forth, trumpet of salvation, and proclaim the triumph of our King. Rejoice too, all the earth, in the radiance of the light now poured upon you and made brilliant by the brightness of the everlasting King; know that the ancient darkness has been forever banished. Rejoice, O Church of Christ, clothed in the brightness of this light; let all this house of God ring out with rejoicing, with the praises of all God's faithful people.

### PREFACE DIALOGUE

- P The Lord be with you.



- C And al - so with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.



**C** We lift them to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



**C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

## EASTER PROCLAMATION

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places, with all our heart and mind and voice, praise You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, and Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For He is the very Paschal Lamb who offered Himself for the sin of the world, who has cleansed us by the shedding of His precious blood. This is the night when You brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt and led them through the Red Sea on dry ground. This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality. This is the night when Christ, the Life, arose from the dead. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of night. Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is Your mercy toward us, O God, that to redeem a slave You gave Your Son. How holy is this night when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away. How holy is this night when innocence is restored to the fallen and joy is given to those downcast. How blessed is the night when man is reconciled to God in Christ. Holy Father, accept now the evening sacrifices of our thanksgiving and praise. Let Christ, the true light and morning star, shine in our hearts, He who gives light to all creation, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

*All extinguish their candles.*

+ SERVICE OF READINGS +

INTRODUCTION TO READINGS

- P** In this most holy night our Savior, Christ the Lord, broke the power of death and by His resurrection brought life and salvation to all creation. Let us praise the Lord, for He truly keeps His word. The sun of righteousness has dawned upon us who have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

HYMN

“Thy Strong Word” *LSB 578:1–3, 6*

*Page numbers are for the pew standard / large print ESV Pew Bibles.*

THE CREATION

*Genesis 1:1–2:3*

- A** A reading from Genesis, the first and second chapters.

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- A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

- P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, through Your Word and Spirit You most wonderfully created all things, and through the Word made flesh You brought new life to fallen humanity. Grant that in Your mercy we may be conformed to the image of Him who shares fully in our humanity, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

THE FLOOD

*Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13*

- A** A reading from Genesis, the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters.

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- A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

- P** Let us pray.

O Lord, You kill and You raise to life; You brought the flood upon a wicked and perverse generation, and yet You saved faithful Noah and his family in the ark. Keep us in safety in the

ark of Christ's Body, the Church, that Your mercy may come to its fullness and Your salvation be preached to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA *Exodus 14:10–15:1*

**A** A reading from Exodus, the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

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**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You once delivered Your people Israel from bondage under Pharaoh and led them by a pillar of cloud and fire through the sea to safety. Grant that we may so follow Christ that through the waters of Baptism we may daily die and rise with Him and walk in safety through the wilderness of this life until we see Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES *Ezekiel 37:1–14*

**A** A reading from Ezekiel, the thirty-seventh chapter.

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**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, Your Son came as the Son of Man to breathe His Word and Spirit upon the dry, dead bones of Adam's children. Grant that we may hear Your holy Word, receive Your Spirit, and rise each day from the death of sin to live in newness of life before You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

THE FIERY FURNACE *Daniel 3*

**A** A reading from Daniel, the third chapter.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

**P** Let us pray.

O God, Your Son protected faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace of the king. Grant us protection in our time of testing that we would boldly confess Your name, reject all false worship, and live and die in confidence, knowing that we are safe in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

CANTICLE                    **“All You Works of God, Bless the Lord” *LSB* 930**

+ SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM +

BAPTISMAL ADDRESS

**P** On this holiest of nights, the whole Church of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls His death and burial, rejoicing with great joy in the Gospel of His glorious and mighty resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul says:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

## THE FLOOD PRAYER

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin.

We pray that You would behold us all according to Your boundless mercy and bless us with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in us, which has been inherited from Adam and which we ourselves have committed since, would be drowned and die. Grant that we be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## RENUNCIATION

**P** Do you renounce the devil?

**C** Yes, I renounce him.

**P** Do you renounce all his works?

**C** Yes, I renounce them.

**P** Do you renounce all his ways?

**C** Yes, I renounce them.

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

**P** Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

**C** Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**P** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son?



**C** Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**P** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**C** Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting.

#### BLESSING

**P** The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life † everlasting.

**R** Amen.

#### THE PEACE

**P** Peace † be with you.

**C** Amen.

#### + SERVICE OF PRAYER +

#### LITANY OF THE RESURRECTION

**A** O Lord,

**C** have mercy.

**A** O Christ,

**C** have mercy.

**A** O Lord,

**C** have mercy.

**A** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

**C** hear us.

**A** Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world,

**C** have mercy on us.

**A** Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification,

**C** have mercy on us.

- A** Who foretold Your Passion, saying, “The Son of Man must be crucified and on the third day rise again,”
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who destroyed death by dying, and by rising to life again brought life and immortality to light,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the women,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who revealed Yourself to the two disciples on the Emmaus road and made Yourself known to them in the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace and Your Spirit,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle Thomas that he too might believe,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, bringing a miraculous catch of fish,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to Peter and to the Twelve, to over five hundred disciples, to James and to all the apostles, and to Paul on the Damascus road,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them,
- C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** By Your glorious resurrection from the dead,
- C** **good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By Your victory over sin and death,
- C** **good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By the majesty of Your risen body,
- C** **good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** We poor sinners implore You
- C** **to hear us, Lord Jesus.**
- A** That we may daily die and rise with You in our Baptism and walk in the freedom of Your forgiveness,

**C** grant us, good Lord.

**A** That we may set our minds on things above and not on earthly things, serving as we have been served by You,

**C** grant us, good Lord.

**A** That we may dwell with You forever in the new creation as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with all the saints,

**C** grant us, good Lord.

**A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** have mercy on us.

**A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** have mercy on us.

**A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** grant us Your peace.

**A** O Lord,

**C** have mercy.

**A** O Christ,

**C** have mercy.

**A** O Lord,

**C** have mercy. Amen.

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

EASTER ACCLAMATION

**P** Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**C** He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN OF PRAISE

“This Is the Feast” *LSB*, p. 155

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Let us pray.

O God, You made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord’s resurrection. Preserve in us the spirit of adoption which You have given so that, made alive in body and soul, we may serve You purely; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

- P** Blessed is the one who considers the poor!
- C** **In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;**
- P** the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;
- C** **You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.**
- P** The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.
- C** **As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!”**
- P** My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”
- C** **And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad.**
- P** All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.
- C** **They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”**
- P** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
- C** **But You, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!**
- P** By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
- C** **But You have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in Your presence forever.**

**Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.  
Amen.**

HOLY GOSPEL

*Mark 16:1–8*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the sixteenth chapter.

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Page 853 / 1014

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN

**“He Is Arisen! Glorious Word! LSB 488**

+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +

PREFACE

*LSB, p. 160*

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who burst forth from the darkness of death and the tomb to eternal life, so that dying with Him through our Baptism, we might also be raised with Him. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

*LSB, p. 161*

**C** **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow’r and might: Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**P** Holy and mighty, holy and merciful God, we give You thanks and praise for the sacrificial death that has made satisfaction for our sins and for the victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that prefigures our own glorious resurrection with Him to everlasting life. He is our paschal Lamb who has won salvation for us, and He is both priest and food at this paschal feast in which He gives us His body to eat and His blood to drink.

Recalling all that He has accomplished for us by His passion and death, His resurrection and ascension, and rejoicing in His promise to come again, we offer You praise and thanksgiving and pray You to prepare us now to receive Him who comes to us in this blessed Sacrament of His body and blood. Preserve us in this faith and grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may ever abide in Him and He in us even to everlasting life. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are Yours, almighty Father, both now and forevermore.

**C** **Amen**

**P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My  $\text{†}$  body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My  $\text{†}$  blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

**P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**P** O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER

*LSB*, p. 162

PAX DOMINI

*LSB*, p. 163

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** Amen.

AGNUS DEI

*LSB*, p. 163

**C** Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION

COLLECT

**P** Let us pray.

O God, for our redemption You gave Your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross and by His glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of the enemy. Grant that all our sin may be drowned through daily repentance and that day by day we may arise to live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

BLESSING

**A** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

**C** Amen.

HYMN

“Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven” *LSB* 477

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