

Sermon
Easter Day 2025 April 20, 2025
John 20:1-18

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Today is Easter Day, the Day of Resurrection. It is the eighth day of the week, the day of a new creation. On this day Jesus rose from the dead defeating sin and death. This is our triumphant holy day and on this day we sing to all creation of the victory of our King.

This day, though, was a long time coming.

In the day the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, the Lord God formed a human being out of the dust of the ground, breathed life into the human, and placed them into a garden that God had planted. In the midst of that garden was the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eventually God created a second person from the side of the first, giving us Adam and Eve.

One day Eve finds herself talking with a serpent who convinces her to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and she gives some of the fruit to her husband who was with her. After eating of the fruit their eyes were opened. Later in the day God is walking through the garden and calls out to the man wondering where he is. Adam responds that they were afraid because they were naked so they hid themselves.

Christian doctrine says that these acts by Adam and Eve brought sin into the world, and it was because of these acts that they were expelled from the garden before they could eat from the tree of life and live forever.

We have just come through the Triduum – the holy days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the Easter Vigil.

In the Gospel of John, which we just heard from, Jesus takes his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden. Judas knew of this place and it was there that Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and turned over to the religious and political authorities.

After Jesus was crucified, John says that Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus to a garden where there was a new tomb in which no one had been laid. Then, as we just heard, early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb in the garden only to find it empty. After telling the disciples about this, she has the first encounter with the risen Christ. At first she mistakes him for the gardener, but then Jesus calls her by name and her eyes are opened.

The story of God and humanity is bookended by these stories of creation and resurrection. In looking at the totality of these stories, especially when viewed through John, you can see how it all comes full circle.

It was in a garden where sin first raised its head by the actions of Adam and Eve. It was in a garden across the Kidron valley where sin raised its head through the actions of Judas.

After their eyes had been opened, Adam and Eve hid from God in the garden when called by name because they didn't want to be found. Mary Magdalene went to the garden in search of her Lord and Savior with her eyes closed to the resurrected Christ, only to have her eyes opened when he called her by name.

Adam and Eve were banished from the garden for fear that they might eat from the tree of life and live forever. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that he is the bread of life and whoever eats of this bread will live forever.

Jesus was born from the Virgin's womb and given human life. After his death Jesus was placed in a virgin tomb where he was given a resurrected life.

And finally, it was a woman, Eve, who is often blamed for that first act of sin and disobedience. It was a woman, Mary Magdalene, who is honored with being the first person to see the risen Christ, thereby leading us back to the garden.

Today is the Day of Resurrection. Today is the day Jesus defeated sin and death. Today is the eighth day of the week and the day of a new creation. Today is the day we cross from death to life, from doubt to belief, from mourning to celebration. For it is on this day when we see Christ alive, and it is on this day all creation shouts, "Alleluia!"

We began in a garden. Our eyes were opened and we were ashamed, so we hid from God, and we were banished from the garden for fear that we might eat from the tree of life. Today we find ourselves back in a garden. Our eyes are opened and we are not ashamed to see the resurrected Christ who calls us by name. Instead of being banished, we are welcomed back to eat from him who is the bread of life and live forever.

So let us eat that bread and drink that cup. Let us not be ashamed to be called by God. Let us live with our eyes open to the new life which we have been shown. And let us joyfully shout with all creation to all who have ears to hear,

“Alleluia! Christ is risen!”

The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!