

**Rejoice** is the word for today.

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. observes that Psalm 118<sup>1</sup> was deeply read by the founders of Christianity. This Psalm is used to present Jesus as the Divine Messiah. That is the reason to **rejoice** and be thankful.

Pope John Paul II's, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae* does not mention any of the following readings. The Rosary mystery is the Resurrection.

## **Acts 4:32-35**

verse 34b<sup>2</sup> for those who owned property or houses would sell them

A scholar points out that owning land must have been widespread.<sup>3</sup> Houses were not bought and sold to make a profit, as is the case today. There was no *housing market*. Houses were bought and sold without a view to a non-existent market.

At the same time, love brought a **rejoicing** unity of spirit to these early Christians.

## **Psalm 118:1-2, 13-15, 22-24**

The Church utilizes this Psalm during the Easter Vigil and Easter,<sup>4</sup> but with different verses. Verses 13-15 and 24 are unique to this Sunday.

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., *The Spirituality of the Psalms* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, page 198.

<sup>2</sup> Indented verses are taken from National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *Mark 10:29: Order in the List, the Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997) 472.

<sup>4</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Roman Missal Restored by Decree of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican and Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Lectionary for Mass: For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America: Second Typical Edition: Volume I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and Saints* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 341, 346.

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Verses 13-15 I was hard pressed and was falling, but the LORD helped me,  
My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior.  
The joyful shout of victory in the tents of the just.

StuhlmueLLer offers a different translation.<sup>5</sup>

I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me.  
The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.  
There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

verses 22-23 The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.  
By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.  
This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and **rejoice** in it.

StuhlmueLLer translates the same verses:

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.  
This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the LORD has made; let us **rejoice** and be glad in it.

Another scholar notes that a new foundation, a new temple is laid here, as Mark 14:57-58 puts it, "not made with hands."<sup>6</sup> The new temple is the hearts of the Faithful.

Additionally, StuhlmueLLer writes,<sup>7</sup>

Psalm 118 may have been sung when pilgrims gratefully came to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, the final harvest festival: verse 15 refers to "the Tents," the booths in which pilgrims lived during the eight-day festival; verse 24, to the refrain, "let us **rejoice**" ("grant salvation") ...

The relationship of Psalm 118 to the Easter celebration has a deep history, indeed. A scholar notes that Isaiah imitated Psalm 118 in thanksgiving for deliverance from exile.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Carroll StuhlmueLLer, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, pages 199-200.

<sup>6</sup> Craig A. Evans, "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 1989), 240.

<sup>7</sup> Carroll StuhlmueLLer, C.P., The Spirituality of the Psalms (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2002) ISBN 0-8146-2599, page 198.



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The Greek-speaking church's preference for speaking of the empty tomb's discovery as having happened "on the third day" (Luke 24:21-23) stands in marked contrast with the earlier "on the first day" formula preferred by the Aramaic-speaking church (Mark 16:2 parr.; **John 20:19**; 1 Cor 16:2; Acts 20:7). Since the Aramaic-speaking Palestinian church knew that Jesus had spoken of his *death* as coming in three days (Luke 13:31-32) and thought of his *resurrection* as coming "after three days" (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; Matt 27:63), it was not inclined to see the empty tomb foreshadowed in Hos 6:2 as was the Greek-speaking church. Instead, the Aramaic-speaking church developed an interpretation of the empty tomb which theologically expressed its faith-conviction that its discovery "on the first day of the week" was a revelatory sign from God that the eschatologically anticipated new creation had begun. For just as the old creation (as described in Gen 1:1-2:4a) was begun by God on the *first day* of the first week of creation, so also Jesus was raised by God "on the first day of the week" to signify that the expected new creation had begun and was moving inexorably toward its completion at the arrival of God's reign, when the cosmic Sabbath would commence (Gen 2:2-3; Lev 23:39; Heb 4:3-10; John 20:26; Luke 9:28).

The existence of the earlier tradition which spoke of the empty tomb as discovered "on the first day" instead of "on the third day" lends support to the view that originally Jesus was understood by his Aramaic-speaking disciples to have died on the third of three figurative days and to have been raised "after three days."

verse 19c Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

The grammarian writes that *stood in their midst* carries a sense of motion.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John M. Perry, "The Three Days in the Synoptic Passion Predictions," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 4 (October 1986) 645-646. This quotation was used in my notes for Pentecost, May 19, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 34.

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Another scholar notes that the agreement between John 20:19 and Luke 24:35 is *most impressive*. This is part of a scenario suggesting that Luke and John had a common, non-Markan source.<sup>13</sup>

verse 23     Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

This verse means that one can refuse the penance imposed by the sacrament of reconciliation without penalty. One is simply no worse off than one was before. This rationale for not accepting penance imposed during the sacrament of reconciliation was suggested in these notes before.

While not making my observation, the grammarian notes a difference in the Greek tenses for *forgive* and *retain*. *Forgive* is in the aorist, a past act, *retain* is in the present “because here we have simply continuing in the same state.”<sup>14</sup>

verse 24     Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

While *Didymus* does mean *the twin*, *Didymus* also means one who cannot make up his mind. Alcuin Albinus, educator and theologian<sup>15</sup> (735-804) writes, “*Didymus (geminus)* means twofold or doubting ...” Alcuin also writes, “Thomas means *abyss*; for with sure faith he penetrated to the depths of the divinity.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Robert H. Stein, “The Matthew-Luke Agreements Against Mark: Insight from John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 3 (July, 1992) 493.

<sup>14</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5th, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 81.

<sup>15</sup> The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) xvi.

<sup>16</sup> Alcuin, “Exposition from the Catena Aurea,” The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 269.

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Chrysostom (354-407) presents the matter differently. "... to question excessively is a sign of a slow intelligence. Of this latter Thomas is accused. For when the Apostles say, *we have seen the Lord*, he did not believe; not so much doubting them as thinking such a thing impossible ..."<sup>17</sup>

verse 25e ... I will not believe."

The grammarian points out that the Greek used here is of special solemn emphasis.<sup>18</sup>

The poor man just would not **rejoice**.

verse 27a Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands ..."

Saint Augustine (354-430) has something to say about this verse. "What else does He say but: 'feel and see.' For he had not eyes in his finger."<sup>19</sup> The Poor Clare concern for light for seeing Divinity is apropos.

verse 31 But these are written that you may come to believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,  
and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The grammarian points out that this verse gives the purpose of the Gospel of John, "addressed to the pagans to be converted or to Christians to be confirmed in their faith."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Chrysostom, *Hom. 86 in John*, in "Exposition from the Catena Aurea," The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 269.

<sup>18</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5<sup>th</sup>, revised edition* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 149-150

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *Tr. 121 in John*, in "Exposition from the Catena Aurea," *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: Volume Two: From the First Sunday in Lent to the Sunday after the Ascension*, tr. and ed. M. F. Toal, D.D. (P.O. Box 612, Swedesboro, NJ 08085: Preservation Press, 1996) 271.

<sup>20</sup> Max Zerwick, S.J. and Mary Grosvenor, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament unabridged, 5<sup>th</sup>, revised edition (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico 1996) 82.

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When we study creation, we, necessary, learn something about the Creator. I always feel that college is about learning something about God. Pius pabulum, contrariwise, is of little use for learning about God. The science television channel leaves me in constant awe as I learn about dinosaurs, the cosmos, and the laws of nature. The wonderment of God is awesome. God loving us, me in particular, is simply dumbfounding. So, **rejoice**.