**Deacon Steve’s Reflection on the Sunday Readings**

**April 1, 2018 – Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord**

For the disciples, all was lost. Just a few days ago, they had celebrated the Passover with Jesus, sharing in the traditional meal as well as the bread and wine, offered by Christ as his Precious Body and Blood. Then, in the darkness of night, their Lord and Master had been betrayed by one of their own, arrested, convicted, scourged and put to death on the cross. His body was laid in a tomb, sealed with a large stone against the entrance, an event witnessed by Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses.

In the early hours of the morning after the sabbath was over, the two women and a third, Salome, came to anoint the body of Jesus. To their great surprise, they found the stone rolled back and a young man (an angel) sitting there who said to them: *“Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.”* Can you imagine the astonishment of the women at the tomb? How would we reconcile the death and burial of a loved one, seen with our own eyes, to such a thing? Yet, these women, and later the apostles and others came to understand and believed, bearing witness to the risen Christ, who appeared to them and others repeatedly in the following days. His suffering, death and resurrection accomplished his great mission of redemption, by which all of us were reconciled to God and brought to new life in Christ.

This great act of redemption is realized for us, when we are baptized into the faith. As Saint Paul said in his Letter to the Romans: *“ . . . We who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized in his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.”*

Although some two thousand years separate us from the historical event of Easter, it is the central and defining event in the history of humanity – our history. Our Lord, the eternally begotten Son of God, took on human flesh so that by his passion and death, we would be redeemed and reconciled with Our Heavenly Father. It is this great sacrifice that is commemorated each time we celebrate the Sacred Liturgy, when we share in the Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ remains the way to truth and salvation. As we heard at the blessing of the Easter Candle at the beginning of the Easter Vigil, Christ is at the core of our very being: *“Christ yesterday and today; the Beginning and the End; the Alpha; and the Omega. All time belongs to him; and all the ages. To him be glory and power; through every age and for ever. Amen.”* May you have a Happy and Blessed Easter!

Deacon Steven K. Szmutko