

**Sermon for April 6, Trinity Lutheran Church, Manilla Trinity Lutheran Church,  
+ Pastor Daniel Vogel, Manning, Iowa + Easter 2: Quasi Modo Geniti Sunday**

+++Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!  
Amen

Dear Friends in Christ; The title of our message for today is “PEACE AND EASTER JOY FOR TODAY” based on our Gospel of *John 20:19 and following: “Peace be with you...As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you....Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven: if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld. ”*

*“He is Risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia!”* With millions of Christians around the world and with the innumerable saints from history and from our loved ones now in heaven we continue to celebrate the one true Eternal Almighty God, Jesus risen from death and alive that the world will be saved from eternal death.

Historically this Sunday was called in latin ‘Quasi Modo Geniti’ Sunday. That’s a latin quote from the first words of our introit, the introductory words for this for first Sunday after Easter, these words: “AS NEWBORN BABES DESIRES THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD...”

On this Sunday once again all of our Bible lessons and stories point to the most important event in the history of the world, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! As our text for this Sunday teaches us this was a super emotional moment for the Apostles. And it should be for all Christians hearing the miraculous story that no one could have ever have imagined, that Jesus was indeed alive and living and HE truly is God among us. Wow that was and that is a very big deal!! And what a challenge for those Apostles to start their new lives over, to move on, and by God’s grace for our sake, they did just that!

In our national culture today we are told there is an epidemic of mental health problems. We are told that our youth are very unhappy and worried about their future and that so many adults feel alone and lonely. I have notice that when us older folks visit the doctor we are asked question after question about our peace of mind, our health, physical, mental, and emotional. We are asked if we have been depressed, worried and similar questions.

In John’s Gospel story of the Resurrection the Apostle Thomas had his own mental struggles. He was filled with doubts and denial as he refused to see the reality of the news he had been told of Jesus’ resurrection. He would not believe what he could not see. Doesn’t that sound familiar?

It is familiar because we hear something similar every Sunday in our public Confession which says; *‘If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us’*: **1 John: 1:8-9**

But ALL the Apostles had every reason to be troubled, confused and worried. Remember they abandoned Jesus to save themselves. Judas was a traitor! Peter even openly denied that he knew Jesus. What kind of friends were they?

But are we as frightened about our sins as Peter and the Apostles may have been when they first saw Jesus alive? Sin is sin and it leads to horrible consequences like hatred that leads to rebellion against God's Will that leads to eternal hell

So how's your health, how is your spiritual health? Why are you a believer? Are you a Christian because of a family tradition or because of friendships here at church or maybe for some other reason? What is your faith based on? Jesus says we are to believe because of Him, because of His Sacred Word, because of His Work as the Son of God even when we cannot see Him.

OUR TEXT SAYS THAT JESUS IS OUR ADVOCATE: That word: "advocate" is a powerful word today. Today it usually means '*someone who publicly supports or recommends a cause or policy*' St. John writes: "**..But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**" Our true and powerfully perfect advocate is Jesus. He was a forgiving, compassionate Advocate for His unfaithful Apostles as He greeted them with the words: "***Peace be with you***". Three times these words of comfort by Jesus are given to emphatically emphasize what He offers to them in this most traumatic time for them.

That peace comes personally from the Living Lord. He appeared alive, no one has ever done that after 3 days in the grave, and no one will ever do that again. And He did this not just for the benefit of His Apostles, but dear friends He did it for you and me as He establishes the Kingdom of God among us.

He rose to complete and to fulfill all of God's promises over the generations. Despite our sin, despite our doubts and failings and our weaknesses we have forgiveness from the One who suffered and died on the bloody Cross of Calvary to pay the price of the punishment that we deserve. He rose and even went to Hell, not to suffer in Hell, but to visibly declare that He was alive and living and that he had won the victory over sin, over evil, over death. This is our identity, that is our future hope!

Will you believe it? Will you believe even if you have not seen Jesus alive? Will you believe by faith in the Lord's Word and testimony?

This is the Easter season; this is the season of Spring and the change of Nature. It is also our first year of the remembrance of Pastor Johnson's death and separation from us, and especially his gift of eternal life to heaven's glory. May we be strengthened in our memory of his faithful ministry among us!

What are you thinking about in this season of Easter? Imagine Peter, the leader of the Apostles, what a whirlwind of emotions he must have had after denying Jesus and sending our Lord to the Cross, now to see Jesus alive. He must have gone from deep despair to absolute euphoria! Wow, hard to imagine that first appearance by Jesus to His closest followers!! Their joy is our joy, our peace, our comfort as we move on in our lives, in our church despite challenges and loss. That is what Pastor Johnson believed, what he preached and lived and we must too.

Jesus said: ***"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."***

Peace, we all need peace and that is what Jesus promised and promises. In this chaotic world we need peace more than ever! Like those 11 Apostles we too find that in our weakness and in our fickle lives we are easily confused and tempted into sin. Yet Jesus offers us peace; spiritual peace, eternal peace. St. John the Apostle wrote: ***"...if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*** For many years Pastor Johnson pronounced this beautiful declaration of absolution and forgiveness each Sunday in this church, the forgiveness from Christ after Confession and repentance. There is no greater gift that he could have given you and left for your future peace.

Thomas came to see the truth of Jesus' resurrection. But it took a long week and Jesus' second appearance for him to come to believe the truth. Jesus said to him in verse 28: ***"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."***

In his daily devotion the Rev. Scott Murray wrote: ***"This is why we Christians must walk by faith and not by sight. If this work of Christ could be proven with inductive or deductive logic, or scientific demonstrations, then we would have no need for God to speak, nor any need to believe. Christianity would be as obvious as any other doctrine. But it is only obvious by faith, which believes the Word of God"***.

Because of what Jesus did on Easter our lives as believers will never be the same. St. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:19: ***"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself"***.

And because we are a new creation God has given us ***"the ministry of reconciliation"***. That means as St. Paul says, that we too are witnesses, we are ambassadors for Christ to our neighbors here in Manilla and beyond. St. Luke wrote of Jesus' promise to these Apostles and to each of us in Acts 1:8; ***"you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."***

Dear friends we have won the lottery!! But not the lottery that you are thinking of! In fact in our Christian life our lottery win is not meant to be easy. Here's what St. Paul wrote about living as a Christian in ***2 Cor. 6:2-10: "Behold, now is the favorable time; behold now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way; by great endurance, in affliction, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true, as unknown, and yet well known, as dying and behold, we live;***

*as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing everything."* Wow, powerful stuff....

Yet we rejoice. St. Paul wrote about this God-given ability to rejoice even in the midst of suffering in Romans 5:1-5: ***"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character, and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."***

The ancient words of Psalm 148 control us: ***"Let us praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven."*** Dear friends, with the Early Christian church that arose out of this God-given new life let us also celebrate the unity and the great power of Christ. Let us rejoice, for the sake of our own spiritual health, for the sake of our families and loved ones, for our church here at Trinity as we call a new pastor, for our neighbors, for the sake of the kingdom of God. In Christ we are moving on to serve Him!

***"AS NEWBORN BABES DESIRES THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD..."*** For generations, for thousands of years God has ruled through His patriarchs, His prophets, His Apostles and now through our pastors and through each of us to tell the story, the greatest story of history, the Easter resurrection story of Jesus Son of God and Son of Man. May the Lord daily help us to remember, to cherish and like newborn babies may we cry out for the spiritual milk that is the WORD that saves, God's Word. And so we end with this wonderful promise of ***St. John 20:30-31: 'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in His name.'***

That is peace dear friends! Take this home this week to guide and comfort you in your daily walk. Go in peace to serve the Lord, In Jesus' Name.....

May the peace of God that beyond all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen