

## **Second Sunday of Easter, April 27**

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The lesson, epistle and Gospel will be read from the Revised Standard Version Bible

**The Collect:** Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Acts 5:27-32**

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Psalm: Psalm 118:14-29 or Psalm 150**

14 The Lord is my strength and my song, \*  
and he has become my salvation.

15 There is a sound of exultation and victory \*  
in the tents of the righteous:

16 "The right hand of the Lord has triumphed! \*  
the right hand of the Lord is exalted!  
the right hand of the Lord has triumphed!"

17 I shall not die, but live, \*

and declare the works of the Lord.

18 The Lord has punished me sorely, \*

but he did not hand me over to death.

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; \*

I will enter them;

I will offer thanks to the Lord.

20 "This is the gate of the Lord; \*

he who is righteous may enter."

21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me \*

and have become my salvation.

22 The same stone which the builders rejected \*

has become the chief cornerstone.

23 This is the Lord's doing, \*

and it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 On this day the Lord has acted; \*

we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Hosannah, Lord, hosannah! \*

Lord, send us now success.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; \*

we bless you from the house of the Lord.

27 God is the Lord; he has shined upon us; \*

form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.

28 "You are my God, and I will thank you; \*

you are my God, and I will exalt you."

29 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; \*

his mercy endures for ever.

## **Or Psalm 150**

1 Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy temple; \*

praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts; \*

praise him for his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; \*

praise him with lyre and harp.

4 Praise him with timbrel and dance; \*

praise him with strings and pipe.

5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; \*

praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.

6 Let everything that has breath \*

praise the Lord.

Hallelujah!

### **Epistle: Revelation 1:4-8**

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Gospel: John 20:19-31**

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them,

“Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

26 Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**On May 2 we celebrate the life of Athanasius Bishop of Alexandria. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses***

Rarely in the history of the Church has the course of its development been more significantly determined by one person than it was by Athanasius in the fourth century. Gregory of Nazianzus called him “the pillar of the Church,” and Basil the Great said he was “the God given physician of her wounds.”

Athanasius was born about 295 in Alexandria and was ordained deacon in 319. He quickly attracted attention by his opposition to the presbyter Arius, whose denial of the full divinity of the Second Person of the Trinity was gaining widespread acceptance. Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, took Athanasius as his secretary and adviser to the first Ecumenical Council, at Nicaea in 325, which dealt with the Arian conflict. Athanasius was successful in winning approval for the phrase in the Nicene Creed which has ever since been recognized as expressing unequivocally the full godhead of the Son: "of one Being with the Father".

When Alexander died in 328, Athanasius became bishop. He fearlessly defended the Nicene Christology against emperors, magistrates, bishops, and theologians. Five times he was sent into exile. He often seemed to stand alone for the orthodox faith. "Athanasius contra mundum (against the world)" became a by-word. Yet, by the time of his last exile, his popularity among the citizens of Alexandria was so great that the Emperor had to recall him to avoid insurrection in the city.

Athanasius wrote voluminously: biblical interpretation, theological exposition, sermons, and letters. His treatise, *On the Incarnation of the Word of God*, is a still widely read classic.

In it, he writes, "The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in his great love took to himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which he, the Word of God, did in the body. Human and human-minded as men were, therefore, to whichever side they looked in the sensible world, they found themselves taught the truth."

Athanasius died in Alexandria in 373.

**Let us pray:** O Lord, who established your servant Athanasius, through wisdom, in your truth: Grant that we, perceiving the humanity and divinity of your Son Jesus Christ, may follow in his footsteps and ascend the way to eternal life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**