

Easter Sunday, Mass During the Day

Fr. Samuel Springuel

5 April, 2026

1st Reading Acts 10:34a,37–43

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 118:1–2,16–17,22–23

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

Gospel John 20:1–9

The sequences are beautiful meditations on the mysteries which we celebrate, so it is a shame that we so seldom use them these days. In fact, only two are required and we are lucky enough that one of them is today's: *Victimæ Paschali laudes*, which we sang earlier. The Latin chant is, of course, beautiful simply to hear and sing, but as Latin is not a language that most of us are conversant in, it is easy to allow the meaning of the words pass us by unnoticed. Said meaning, however, is beautiful in its own right. To that end, I want to go back and walk through it line by line.

Victimæ Paschali laudes
immolent Christiani.

The official lectionary translation for this line is, “Christians, to the Paschal Victim

Offer your thankful praises!” Now, while this translation is rhythmically pleasing, preserving as it does the same number of syllables in each phrase as in the Latin, I find its meaning lacking. It's the word “offer” that gets me. It is such a banal word. We use it in daily speech when we “offer to help” or “make an offer” or even “offer it up.” It conveys the sense that we are taking from what is ours and turning control of it over to someone else, the recipient who gets to decide what to do with it. It contains a sense of surrender that I think is totally appropriate as we're discussing the attitude we should have when giving praise to Christ, but the Latin word is “immolent.” That's the root of our word “immolate:” to burn completely with fire. Our praises should completely consume us; we are to be on fire with praise for the Paschal Victim. This is more than a mere offering, but rather an echo of The Sacrifice that Christ himself offered on the Cross.

Agnus redemit oves:
Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.

We have here two contrasts set up. The first is “agnus,” the lamb, and “oves,” the sheep. The sheep is a collective plural, we could translate it as “flock” except that this would lose out on the individuality of the members.

We, the sheep, are both members of a collective, the flock, but also individuals therein, each of us a particular sheep. The lamb is a part of this flock, one of us, but one of its smallest members. By normal human standards, the lamb is an insignificant part of the sheep. And yet, the lamb is the subject of the first contrast; the lamb is the active agent which redeems the sheep.

The second contrast is between “innocens,” the innocent or sinless, and “peccatores,” the sinners. Christ is the sinless lamb who reconciles us, his sinful sheep, to the Father. What generosity and power we see in this great act. On the heels of the first line, we are reminded of the power of The Sacrifice Christ made on the Cross and invited to contemplate how God’s strength has come through what we normally perceive as weakness.

*Mors et vita duello
confluxere mirando:
dux vitæ mortuus regnant vivus.*

Another contrast confronts us: “mors,” death, and “vita,” life. In some ways this is the most fundamental contrast of the Easter mystery. Christ is “dux vitæ,” the Lord of Life, who “regnant vivus,” having life, reigns. But he is the one who “mortuus,” has died. This is a “confluxere mirando,” stupendous conflict, one which renders us speechless. Not because it is too abstract for us to think of, but rather because it is so personal. “Duello,” life and death are caught in a duel, a personal conflict, in Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. This conflict isn’t a war we see on the news, happening to people far away. It is over us. Life and death duel over us like two gentlemen might have duelled over the affections of a lady at some points in history. Christ, our Savior, embodies this duel that we have a personal stake in.

*Dic nobis, Maria,
quid vidisti in via?*

Emphasizing our personal stake in the duel between life and death, the next line starts out “dic nobis,” tell us. What has happened? We must know the result of the duel. Mary, the Magdalen, what did you see that Easter morning? On tenterhooks, we listen carefully as she responds:

*Sepulcrum Christi viventis,
gloriam vidi resurgentis.*

She went to the “sepulcrum Christi,” Christ’s tomb, a place of death, and found him “viventis,” living! Christ may have ended Good Friday in death, laid in a tomb, but life has won the duel. Mary proclaims, “gloriam vidi resurgentis,” I have seen the glory of the Resurrection!

*Angelicos testes,
sudarium et vestes.*

Under Jewish law, the testimony of a single witness was insufficient. To be taken as fact, an event must be witnessed by two or more. So Mary corroborates her testimony by citing other “testes,” witnesses: “angelicos,” the angels, “vestes,” the burial garments, and “sudarium,” the napkin used to wrap Jesus’s head. To her human testimony, Mary adds divine, angelic testimony and that of the material world. All of creation is bound up in proclaiming the Resurrection.

*Surrexit Christus spes mea:
præcedet vos in Galilæam.*

Having corroborated her testimony, Mary once again affirms “surrexit Christus spes mea,” Christ my hope has arisen! What more, he has a message for the

Apostles, for us: “præcedet vos in Galilaeam,” he will precede you into Galilee, into the ordinary circumstances of our lives. We need not seek Jesus out as she did. The tomb is empty and we will not encounter him there. Instead we will encounter him in our Galilee, the places where we live and work.

Scimus Christum surrexisse

a mortuis vere:

And now “scimus,” we know. Mary has told us what she found, corroborated her testimony, and given us Christ’s message for us. We know what has happened and must join in the proclamation: “Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere,” Christ has truly risen from the death. The Eastern Churches have the tradition of greeting each other with the call and response “Christ is risen!” “Indeed, He is risen!” during Eastertide. Perhaps we too should adopt such a pattern.

tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.

And finally, to end the poem we join Mary in declaring Christ our hope, saying, “tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere,” You, O Victorious King, have mercy on us.”

Amen. Alleluia!