

1 Peter: the Living Hope of the Resurrection (2nd Sunday of Easter, Year A)

The Sundays of Easter

The first reading is from Acts, in a three-year cycle of parallel and progressive selections: material is presented on *the life of the primitive Church, its witness, and its growth*. For the reading from the apostles, *1 Peter is in Year A, 1 John in Year B, Revelation in Year C*. These are the texts that seem to fit in especially well with *the spirit of joyous faith and sure hope proper to this season*. (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, no. 100 [1981]).

1 Peter 1:3-9—Living Hope through the Resurrection

[¹ *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,* ² *chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*] ³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* ⁴ *and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,* ⁵ *who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* ⁶ *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials,* ⁷ *so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* ⁸ *Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy.* ⁹ *As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.* (1 Peter 1:3-9)

1. Context of Letter

- a. Peter: “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1:1)
- b. Audience: “the exiles of the Dispersion” (Greek *parepidēmois diasporas*) (1:1)

2. Trinitarian Greeting (1:2)

- a. “Chosen” by God the *Father*
- b. “Sanctified” by the *Spirit*
- c. “Sprinkled” with the blood of *Jesus* (cf. Exod 24:1-8)

3. New Birth: “born anew” (Greek *anagennēsas*) (1:3)

4. New Promised Land: for an “Inheritance” in “heaven” (1:3-4)

5. Last Days: faith revealed in “the last time” (Greek *eschatos*) (1:5)

6. Suffering: Rejoicing in “trials” (Greek *peirasmois*); like “gold tested in fire” (1:7)

7. Second Coming: “revelation” (Greek *apokalypsis*) of Jesus = his *Parousia*

8. Eyewitnesses: audience has “never seen Jesus”; contrast Peter himself (1:8)

Living Tradition

The Mass Readings Explained

Jerome: Simon Peter the son of John, from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee, brother of Andrew the apostle, and himself chief of the apostles, after having been bishop of the church of Antioch and *having preached to the Dispersion—the believers in circumcision*, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia—pushed on to Rome in the second year of Claudius to over-throw Simon Magus, and *held the sacerdotal chair there for twenty-five years until the last, that is the fourteenth, year of Nero*. At his hands he received the crown of martyrdom being nailed to the cross with his head towards the ground and his feet raised on high, asserting that he was unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord. *He wrote two epistles which are called Catholic*, the second of which, on account of its difference from the first in style, is considered by many not to be by him. Then too the Gospel according to Mark, who was his disciple and interpreter, is ascribed to him. *On the other hand, the books, of which one is entitled his Acts, another his Gospel, a third his Preaching, a fourth his Revelation, a fifth his “Judgment” are rejected as apocryphal*. Buried at Rome in the Vatican near the triumphal way he is venerated by the whole world. (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 1; trans. NPNF1, 3.361)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2nd Sunday of Easter, Year A)

1. Why are the apostolic writings of Peter and John read by the Church during the Sundays of Easter? How are they arranged in a three-year cycle?

2. According to early church tradition, to whom was the first letter of Peter written?

For Further Reading

1. Keating, Daniel. *First and Second Peter, Jude*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
2. Bede the Venerable. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985.
3. Bray, Gerald. *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.