

Lessons for 6th Sunday of Easter – May 22, 2022

Collect: O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desotr; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Acts 16:9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying , “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and say at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 67

May God be merciful to us and bless us,
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.
Let the people praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!
for you judge the people with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.

Let the people praise you, O God;

let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has brought forth her increase;

may God, our own God, give us his blessing.

May God give us his blessing,

and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Second Reading: Revelation 21:10, 22:1-22:5

And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations,. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship; him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: John 14:23-29

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, “I am going away, and I am coming to you.” If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is great than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 6th Sunday of Easter, May 22, 2022.

We welcome this morning staff and residents of Chrysalis House in Annapolis. It is one of the organizations that St. Christopher's supports.

As I was reading about this organization and its mission of recovery, I was reminded that recovery is also central to what the church contributes to the world. The word "chrysalis" means a "stage in development." Recovery is such a stage. It's part of a healing process.

The concept of recovery assumes that we have lost our way and want to find it again. "I was lost, but now I am found." This sequence is captured in this morning's first reading (**Acts 16:14**): "The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly....."

Opening hearts and listening eagerly. What a combination. What a stage in development. This stage is a team approach that can lead to recovery. Chrysalis House and its supporters and its clients are all partners. And we are partners with something in common: "imperfection is our middle name."

And that common characteristic is why we respond to One who offers acceptance of the imperfection, guidance as we seek to improve, and forgiveness when we lose sight of the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

In short, we have a lot in common, which means that a supportive relationship is in order. The Church offers financial and volunteer and prayerful support, and Chrysalis House puts those expressions of support to work.

The whole notion of recovery prompts some to say "There but for the grace of God go I," as if we have escaped the evils of addiction. But, of course, we haven't escaped the lure of addictive behavior. All of us are tested, and all of us need help in resisting temptation. It's who we are as free human beings.

And it's very tough to resist temptation without the help of others. God knows this. We are part of His Creation after all. He bears some responsibility, in that we are free to obey or disobey. And, thanks be to God, He provides help. Such

help comes in many forms. For you and me in this place, the help is in Jesus of Nazareth, born, died, and raised to new life.

We see the Risen Christ as a gift. From today's Psalm (**Psalm 67**): "May God be merciful to us and bless us, show us the light of your countenance and come to us."

And that's exactly what God has done in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Today's passage from Revelation (**Revelation 21:10, 22 – 22:5**) described this gift as "the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city."

What an interesting phrase: "through the middle of the street of the city." City streets are places of temptation and redemption. It's where free people get to choose. Sometimes we make choices that serve neither us nor others. But other times we makes choices that serve both us and others.

At St. Christopher the Sea and at Chrysalis House, we are trying hard to make choices that lift up rather than tear down. From today's **Gospel (John 14:23-29)**: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let our hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

This assurance from the Lord is what our two institutions have in common, which explains in part why so many folks are engaged in both, as staff or residents or volunteers or supporters. We share a recognition that sometimes we misuse God-given freedom, and therefore need forgiveness and a second and third and however many chances to shift our behavior to a more positive gear.

The Risen Christ is not going to change his behavior, which is to save. Our choice is whether to accept that salvation or put it on hold or deny it. The Church and recovering institutions like Chrysalis House are places of acceptance. "Thank you, Lord" is the attitude binds us.

And we are delighted that our guests are here today to share their stories and their decisions and their commitments and their hopes. And we are delighted to share ours. And to remember that there is significant recovery overlap between our respective missions.

The hymn we just sang (**Hymn 707**) is worth review. It describes the missions of both organizations. And not only the “missions,” but the manner in which we pursue these missions:

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

To our guests today, welcome. And thank you for your service and your courage and your hope. And thank you to our Lord who always welcomes us home, a home based on open hearts and eager listening and really brave responses to new opportunities.

May God bless our two institutions as we seek to do God’s will, and, in so doing, strengthen our will. *Amen.*

Sixth Sunday of Easter Service – May 22, 2022

Prelude

Hymn 542 – Christ is the world's true Light

Christ is the world's true Light, its Captain of salvation,
the Daystar, clear and bright, of every race and nation;
new life, new hope awakes, for all who own his sway:
freedom her bondage breaks, and night is turned to day.

In Christ all races meet, their ancient feuds forgetting,
the whole round world complete, from sunrise to this setting:
when Christ is throned as Lord all shall forsake their fear,
to plough-share beat the sword, to pruning hook the spear.

One Lord, in one great Name unite us all who own thee;
cast out our pride and shame that hinder to enthrone thee;
the world has waited long, has travailed long in pain;
to heal its ancient wrong, come, Prince of Peace, and reign.

Opening sentence - BCP page 40

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Invitation to Confession – BCP page 41

So that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship Almighty God, let us, with penitent and obedient hearts, confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

Confession – BCP pages 41-42

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their

faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Absolution – BCP page 42

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Gloria – BCP page 42

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Venite – BCP page 44

Come, let us sing to the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his and he made it,
 and his prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the people with his truth.

Psalm 67 – insert

First Reading: Acts 16:9-15 – insert

Second Reading: Revelation 21:10, 22 - 22:5 – insert

Hymn 707

Take my life and let it be

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King;
Take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.
Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Gospel Lesson: John 14:23-29 - insert

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Welcome and guest comments

Apostles' Creed – pp 53-54

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried,
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father
almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Suffrages A – page 55

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
and grant us thy salvation.
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
and make thy chosen people joyful.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
for only in thee can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
and guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let thy way be known upon earth;
thy saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
and sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collect for Easter 6 – insert

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayers for Sunday and Chrysalis House - BCP p 56

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Dear Lord, we give you thanks for Chrysalis House: for its mission of recovery, for its staff and volunteers, for those who seek and accept and build on the help and guidance provided, for those who support the program with their time, talent and treasure. We thank you too, Lord, for the outreach of St. Christopher's, individual and collective, to agencies throughout the region. Help us all, whatever our engagement, to give thanks for our blessings by offering blessings to others. In Jesus' Name we pray. *Amen.*

General Thanksgiving - BCP pp 58-59

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Announcements and *America*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom – BCP, p 59

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Grace – BCP, p 59

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 632 – O Christ, the Word Incarnate

O Christ, the Word Incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth, unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky;
We praise thee for the radiance that from the scripture's page,
a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

The Church from our dear Master received the word divine,
and still that light is lifted o'er all the earth to shine.
It is the chart and compass that o'er life's surging seas,
mid mists and rocks and quicksands, still guides, O Christ, to thee.

O make thy Church, dear Savior, a lamp of purest gold,
To bear before the nations thy true light as of old;
O teach thy wandering pilgrims by this their path to trace,
till, clouds and darkness ended, they see thee face to face.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude