



## ***What Was it Like that First Easter Morning?***

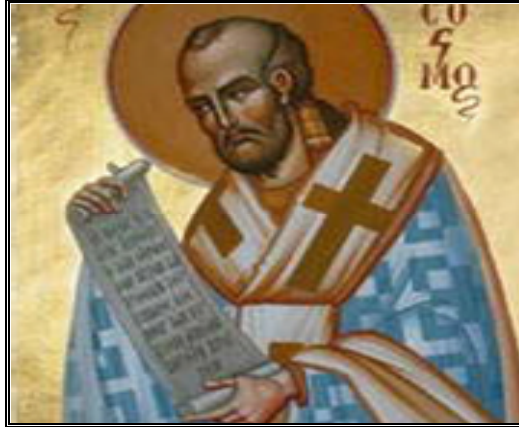
**By Mary Ann Collett**

Do you believe that Christ died on a cross for our sins and rose again? That is all that is necessary to begin. Start there and let your faith unfold as you enter into the tomb, see that it is empty. Can you imagine what Mary must have thought and felt as she entered inside the tomb and finding that Jesus was gone? It was empty!

Take a few minutes and reflect and contemplate what she must have experienced. It is truly a gift of faith like Mary, we too need to be able to leave believing that He is risen! He is alive and not dead. He is active in our everyday lives. Thank you, Jesus for your sacrifice and love!

Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:17 ***“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”*** But we know and believe that He is alive! Just think what He does unconditionally in and through us daily!

I came across an article about ***St. John Chrysostom*** and reflected on his sermon about Easter and would like to share it with you. It is even for those who have not kept the Lenten fast, and to rejoice and enter into the Easter feast of the resurrection. We have continued to count our blessings as the pandemic continues and many of us are looking towards Easter with hope of life renewed.



*St. John Chrysostom*

This classic Paschal or Easter Sermon is from St. John Chrysostom, born around 347 AD. St. John became a monk and was ordained a priest to serve the Church in Antioch where his eloquent preaching on the Sacred Scriptures earned him the title of “Chrysostom” (meaning golden-mouthed). His devotion to the written Word of God was matched by a love of the Eucharist and of divine worship. St. John was one of the most famous preachers and reformers of the second half of the fourth century. He was a priest in his native city of Antioch, Syria, and later became Patriarch of Constantinople. St. John Chrysostom is regarded as a “*Doctor of the Church*” by Catholics and one of the three Holy Hierarchs and Ecumenical teachers by Eastern Orthodox Christians. Beginning in 390, he preached a famous series on the New Testament, including ninety sermons on Matthew, eighty-eight on John, and thirty-two on Romans. His reforms to purify the church brought him banishment; he died at age fifty in the year 407 during a forced march into exile.

### *An Easter Sermon from St. John Chrysostom*

Is there anyone who is a devout lover of God? Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival! Is there anyone who is a grateful servant? Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!

Are there any weary with fasting? Let them now receive their wages! If any have toiled from the first hour, let them receive their due reward; If any have come after the third hour, let him with gratitude join in the Feast! And he that arrived after the sixth hour, let him not doubt; for he too shall sustain no loss. And if any delayed until the ninth hour, let him not hesitate; but let him come too. And he who arrived only at the eleventh hour, let him not be afraid by reason of his delay.

For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, as well as to him that toiled from the first. To this one He gives, and upon another He bestows. He accepts the works as He greets the endeavor. The deed He honors and the intention He commends.

Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord! First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day!

You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!

Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it.

He destroyed Hades when He descended into it. He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh. Isaias foretold this when he said, "You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below."

Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with.  
It was in an uproar because it is mocked.  
It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed.  
It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated.  
It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive.  
Hell took a body, and discovered God.  
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.  
It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.  
O death, where is thy sting?  
O Hades, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, O death, are annihilated!  
Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!  
Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!  
Christ is Risen, and life is liberated! Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen! Happy Easter!



Mary Ann Collett is the proud mother of 3 married daughters and 7 grandchildren. She is an inspiring and dynamic Catholic Lay Evangelist whose gift is to intertwine Scripture and personal stories. Mary Ann Collett, MSW, MA, CLEM, LLC, is a *Bereavement Counselor, Life Coach, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Director, Support Groups, Speaker for Retreats and Workshops*. She is in private practice in Red Bank. Mary Ann has been in the Healing Ministry for over 36 years. She is the co-founder of the thriving ministry Catholic Women of Zion celebrating their 32nd year in 2021. She has traveled nationally and internationally to spread the message of the Kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.