

Easter Sunday 2026

A Sermon Preached by Fr Ian M Delinger

on April 5, 2026

Acts 10:34-43 / Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 / Colossians 3:1-4 / Matthew 28:1-10

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Happy Easter!

**SHOW SHIRT: Jesus with the caption "I'm back!"**

You wouldn't think that *fear* would be part of Easter celebrations! But there it is!

- In Acts: *Anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God.* (φοβούμενος = *is fearing*)
- In the Gospel: both the Angel and Jesus tell the Marys: *Do not be afraid* (φοβεῖσθε)
- And then the Marys skip off to tell the Disciples about "*I'm back!*" *with fear and great joy* (φόβου).



And I have checked the Greek: they all have the same root of φόβῆ. But it's EASTER! Jesus is risen! This day cannot be about *fear*! Imagine how many of you would have turned back to your car had the Ushers greeted you with *Welcome! Have a fearful Easter!*

Even though these terms all come from the same word, they must have different meanings. And I think we *can* have a fearful Easter! Let me give you some examples.

Weddings. At the rehearsal, I always ask the Groom how he will feel about the ceremony. He is always as cool as a cucumber, says that he's fine, he's not afraid or nervous, and he's quite dismissive of my question. I'm like, *OK. Fine. Make sure you are here an hour before the ceremony starts.* And I make sure the Best Man gets the same message.

The day comes. The Groom and Best Man show up in the church. I ask them what they did the night before and check if they have had anything to eat that morning. I have them look over the registers to make sure everything is correct. And then I ask, *"How are you doing?"* And almost every single time, the Groom is so frightened that he can barely hold himself together! The unbridled fear exists in even those who had a bit of Dutch Courage before they arrived!

A few other examples include:

- Parenthood: in the delivery room when the chemicals in your brain are like a Midwest casserole, and you are frightened beyond comprehension coupled with excitement and joy.
- What about every career change you've ever made...those few days in between jobs when fear and excitement occupy your entire body in equal measure simultaneously.
- And at the amusement park. There's this ride called Drop Tower that cranks you up to 227ft in the air and then drops you in a freefall at 62mph! You scream bloody murder, with tears in your eyes ... and the minute you get off, you get right back in line!

These are the type of fear that you can't pinpoint or explain. It's indescribable fear because it is mixed with excitement and joy! The fear augments the great joy. A groom can't describe his fear on his wedding day. A new parent cannot describe the fear that they have as they go into the labor & delivery room. It's a different emotion, one that is set on things that are above:

*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

It's a different kind of fear that only comes with joy ... and it's nothing to be afraid of.

*Being afraid* is different. Both the angel and Jesus say: *Do not be afraid!* That's because Jesus' Resurrection is nothing to *be afraid of, to be frightened of*. To be afraid or frightened is to believe that something is dangerous or a threat. Your marriage, the birth of your child, and a thrill ride are not dangerous or threats. The angel and Jesus are saying:

*Don't be afraid! "I'm Back" but not dangerous or a threat.*

And the women believe them, and their fear is not from something that they perceive to be dangerous or a threat. Their fear is that inexplicable emotion that makes you giddy, excited, tearful, grateful, *joyful*. It's that emotion that comes with a deep love for another. It's the emotion that comes when there is a seismic change in conditions.

What a wedding, a birth, a career change, a thrill ride, *The Resurrection* have in common is a seismic change in conditions in very short period of time – a seismic change in conditions that you know will be positive, and that there is nothing to be afraid of, nothing dangerous or threatening. The fear and the joy happen at the same time ... and the synergy is uncontrollable and uncontainable. Your mind is set on things that are above!

That's what happened to the Marys as they witnessed their Messiah – *our* Messiah – risen from the tomb! The synergy of their fear and joy was uncontrollable and uncontainable, so they *ran* to tell the Disciples. And they *clung* to Jesus' feet.

That is the emotion that we need today as we celebrate The Resurrection – Jesus conquering Death that we might live! Death is no longer dangerous or a threat, it is not to be feared because Jesus has made Death not the end. And He did that because He loves us! And that should create in us an emotion that is so overwhelming that we cannot control or contain it!

*He's Back!*

Easter is our thrill ride! We experience The Resurrection with fear and great joy! And when we experience the fear and great joy of Easter, we get right back in line to do it again!

Do not be afraid to proclaim Jesus is Risen.

Run from here with fear and great joy to proclaim that Jesus is Risen!

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**