



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center is the ministry center of The Community of the Cross, an intentional community of Christians affiliated with the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America. ALL ARE WELCOME



St. Mary Magdala Spiritual Center  
**FIRST SUNDAY**  
April 2026 Vol 19 Issue 4  
2800 Rolston Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

### CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS TRULY RISEN

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#### Weekly Liturgy

11:00 SUNDAY live and on ZOOM - email or text Bishop John or Fr. Cliff for Zoom link  
2800 Rolston Street  
Fort Wayne

#### Evening Prayer

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm on Zoom

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This first Sunday of April we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. We see an icon on the top left of this page that shows Christ "harrowing the halls of hell." Having defeated Hades, the guardian of the underworld, who is lying beneath the cross in this icon, he grabs the hand of Adam and Eve and leads them out of the underworld and into life anew. Christ is risen! Indeed, he is risen! In this icon Christ is freeing the captives, bringing his people safely home! I like that image!

Life and death and eternity are mysteries. Easter is not about answering those mysteries but it is a time that calls us to think about and contemplate these mysteries. The scriptures tell us "Why do you search for the Living One among the dead? Jesus is not here; Christ has risen." (Luke 24:5b-6)

Where is he? Where have you taken him? These are the questions of those who came to anoint Jesus the day after his burial. And later that same day, he appears to many of them in different situations, eats with some of and they don't recognize him until he breaks the bread and blesses it. Is that not how we are often too? We do not see Christ in one another or in the poor one begging on the street. Instead we look for him on the altar much like those who looked for him in the empty tomb. Yet, he told us he would be here with us. We would find him among us. "For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me." (Mt: 25:35-37)

Let us rejoice that Christ is risen and let us look for him where he told us he will be - not in the empty tomb but living among us in those most in need.

May you have a happy and blessed Easter and may you find Christ where he told us we would find him.

+John

### EVENING PRAYER

We will have evening prayer on Wednesdays at 7:00 on zoom. Fr. Ross McCrory is leading evening prayer in England at an earlier hour and you

can contact him on email at [rossmccrory1@gmail.com](mailto:rossmccrory1@gmail.com).

## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Pray for peace and an end to all wars! Christ is not a military king and this talk of Armageddon is absolute heresy and blasphemy giving persons who profit off of war money and power. Do not be taken in by their bible quotes and actions. War is not the way of Christ and it cannot be the way of Christ's people!

Pray for those affected by ICE raids in their neighborhoods and for all those arrested and imprisoned by ICE. Pray for the surviving family members and friends of those who have been murdered, abused, tortured, and imprisoned unjustly. *Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt!* Pray for their oppressors as well that they may come to see the Light as well.

Pray for Myra Tovey who died last week and also pray for her husband and family. Pray for all those facing physical illness. Pray for Kris Timmerman who will be having surgery next week and also remember Kris' sister who has stage 4 cancer. Pray for Roger Summey who will be having knee surgery soon. Remember Steve and Sandy Sullivan who are still recovering from recent medical events and their daughter, Kathy, who has cancer. Remember also Pidge and all others who are struggling with cancer. Pray for Fr. Cliff's wife Lil as she continues to need care. Pray for Bill Hoot and Ginny also.

Pray for true peace in Gaza, the West Bank and in Ukraine and for protection of their citizens. Pray also for those who work tirelessly in support of those in Palestine and in Ukraine and those displaced and suffering.

Pray for Justice - for without Justice, there can be no peace.

Pray for the caretakers, the nurses and doctors, the ambulance drivers and teams of workers in the hospitals and care centers who are often overworked and stressed by the demands of their jobs.

Pray for all to see that God is love and that we are our sibling's keeper and that acts of violence are

acts against God.

Pray for all to have adequate food and housing, give us all our daily bread.

Pray for the release of hostages and refugees to pursue their dreams with their parents, families and loved ones.

## READINGS FOR APRIL

### Resurrection of the Lord, Apr 05, 2026

Acts 10:34-43      Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  
Colossians 3:1-4      John 20:1-18

### Second Sunday of Easter, Apr 12, 2026

Acts 2:14a, 22-32      Psalm 16  
1 Peter 1:3-9      John 20:19-31

### Third Sunday of Easter, Apr 19, 2026

Acts 2:14a, 36-41      Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19  
1 Peter 1:17-23      Luke 24:13-35

### Fourth Sunday of Easter, Apr 26, 2026

Acts 2:42-47      Psalm 23  
1 Peter 2:19-25      John 10:1-10

### Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 03, 2026

Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16  
1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14

## CLERGY SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

April 5	Cliff+	Easter
April 12	+John	Easter 2
April 19	Cliff+	Easter 3
April 26	Chalene+	Easter 4
May 3	+John	Easter 5 - Retreat

## MONASTIC WAY

A copy of Monastic Way by Joan Chittister, OSB should be sent to you on the first. If you don't receive it, let me know and I'll send it to you. Sr. Joan and the Erie Benedictines have made this possible and free to all. You can find more from Sr. Joan at <https://www.joanchittister.org/>

## THE ROCK

Sally Foster-Fulton

from *Step Gently in the World*

You know, I was no ordinary rock. I mean, I don't really come off right in those stories. No, it wasn't like I was just shoved in front of a hole.

I was special: sculpted and crafted every bit as

carefully as that cross they hung him on.

They'd smoothed my hard, weathered edges so I'd roll. Then they'd struggled under my weight, dug trenches for me to follow up the hill a little ways, and nailed pegs in the ground so I'd stay put until it was time.

And I was huge: a giant turned into a tool designed to keep things out and in.

They'd carried his broken body into the tomb as the sun set on Friday night and placed it, lifeless, on one of my brother stones. Then it was my turn. After they'd removed the pegs, and I'd found *my* final resting place, nobody was gonna turf me out of the way. I knew my job. I closed things up, put a final end to things. I was the seal ... rock solid ... immovable. That was me.

Well, that's what you'd think, wouldn't you? That's what anyone would expect. But then, we'd had dealings with him before:

In the beginning, we'd been putty in his hands: the stuff of creation, and we'd given way then.

When the Israelites were thirsty in the desert, the order had been given to strike us and we'd give water. We obeyed.

Into stones as solid as me had been chiseled truths so eternal that they would echo down time long after the original stones had turned to dust and blown away.

We'd even had personal encounters with the one I wouldn't be able to hold:

He'd been tempted to turn us into bread, but he'd known that life was more than just existing.

And later on, he'd challenged men to be the first to cast us if they were innocent, and they threw us away.

Only a few days ago, the powerful who silenced him were told we would shout aloud if his followers were stopped.

I knew my job. I closed things up, put a final end to things. I was the seal: rock solid, immovable; that was me. Well, that's what you'd think, wouldn't you?

But there is something far more powerful than me: something that can never be closed up or ended; one thing that is truly immovable. In this Jesus Christ, I met my match and my Maker. He *moved* me, and he'll *move* you too.

## **The Cross and the Machinery** **Rev. Cameron Trimble**

Jesus was not killed in a moment of chaos. His death happened through a system that functioned just as it was meant to.

- There was a governor who knew the execution was wrong but chose to keep order instead of doing what was right.
- Religious leaders protected their own positions by siding with those in power.
- The crowd was influenced by fear, rumors, and pressure.
- Soldiers simply followed their orders.
- The process turned a person into a problem that needed to be managed.

The Gospel writers make sure we see this. They slow the story down, name each person involved, and show every step. This story is not just about one man's suffering. It's about how a whole society can take part in harm without ever really calling it what it is.

Good Friday is not just about what happened to Jesus. It's also about how harm gets organized.

Today, we see systems being tested right in front of us. Some policies limit who can take part in public life. Whole groups of people are talked about as threats or burdens. Wars happen far away while markets react instantly. Decisions are made that change people's lives, but no one seems truly responsible.

Most of this doesn't feel like a crisis when it happens. It feels routine, legal, and justified. That's

how systems keep going.

On Good Friday, the system didn't feel like a machine to those inside it. It felt necessary. It felt like keeping order. It felt like doing what needed to be done.

That's what makes it so dangerous.

James Cone, in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, wrote that the crucifixion was a first-century lynching.<sup>1</sup> Rome used it to send a message: this is what happens when you step outside the boundaries of power. The cross was not just about death. It was a public warning, meant to show the crowd how to behave. Cone says we can't understand the cross unless we see how it works within systems of domination. It's not just a symbol. It's political, social, and real.

Once you see this, it's harder to distance yourself, because the question changes. It's no longer, "What happened to Jesus?" It becomes, "How does this keep happening?"

One detail in the story stays with me.

While Jesus is dying, the soldiers gamble for his clothes. They don't stop or think about what they're doing. They don't see the seriousness of their actions. They just keep going. That's how systems work; they teach people to keep moving forward.

Howard Thurman once asked what happens to the human spirit when it has to live in conditions that deny its dignity.<sup>2</sup> He saw that the biggest danger is not just what systems do to outsiders, but also what they do to the people who enforce them. Something narrows. Something hardens. Something learns not to see.

Good Friday doesn't ask us to put on grief. It asks us to look closely at how harm becomes normal. It asks us to notice where we're being taught not to see. It asks us to pay attention to the quiet ways we adjust, explain, and move on. And it reminds us that we're not just bystanders.

The hard truth is that any of these roles could be

ours. We might be the anxious leader trying to keep things together, the voice that goes along to avoid trouble, the crowd that believes what it's told, the worker who follows orders, or sometimes, the one who refuses.

There's not much resolution in this story. No one steps in to stop the execution. The system doesn't fix itself in time. The crowd doesn't change its mind.

What's left is a witness. A small group stays. They can't change what happens, but they refuse to leave. They stay present, even when it costs them. Their presence keeps something human alive in a moment meant to erase it.

We're not separate from this story. We live inside systems that shape people's lives every day. Some of these systems protect life, and some take away from it.

The work is not to fix everything at once. No one can do that. The work is to stay awake to what is happening. To resist the slow training that teaches us not to see. To remain human in the middle of structures that can make that difficult.

Good Friday doesn't end with clear answers or victory. It leaves us with a body, a silence, and a question we can't avoid: What kind of people will we become inside systems like these?

We are in this together,

Rev. Cameron Trimble

From: [camerontrimble@substack.com](mailto:camerontrimble@substack.com)

## **OCCA VIRTUAL RETREAT May 2 to 10th**

There will be five days of live presentations and activities via zoom. On May 2, we will meet from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. eastern time with a 30-minute lunch break. The remaining four days will offer pre-recorded presentations and suggested individual activities to offer flexibility while maintaining a retreat atmosphere for the entire nine days.

**MORE INFO TO COME LATER THIS MONTH**