

(choir singing in foreign language)

- Beloved let us unite our hearts, and our voices in our prayer of confession. Let us pray. Oh, most merciful Father who will us not the death of any sinner, but rather that he should return onto the, and be saved. Comfort us who are aggrieved by the weight of our sin. We confessed to thee, and we have been slow to believe the good news made known in Jesus Christ. We confess that like the disciples of old, we have not expected great things to happen to us. We have doubted the power of Christ's resurrection in our lives. Forgive us for believing that the triumph of right is too good to be true. Restore us through thy I pardoning grace to a child by faith. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Contrary to our unwillingness to believe the good news. The words of assurance come to us from the scriptures from a day when there was as much doubt as there is now. And they were spoken to people who had as much doubt as we do, who like us, whereas slow to believe the good news, but the words of scripture tell us that Christ was not permanently dead when he was crucified, that he was alive again, that he is alive evermore, and that he is alive now. What comforting indeed, what thrilling words these are. It is for us to pray for grace to believe them, and to act upon them. Amen. (soft music) (choir singing in foreign language) The reading of the scripture this morning comes from John 20, verses one through 16. Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon, Peter, and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb "and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciples and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple, outran Peter and reached the tomb first and stooping to look in. He saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came following him and he went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths line, and the napkin which had been in his head, not lying with the linen cloth, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who reached the tomb first, also went in and he saw and believed. For his yet they did not know the scripture that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had laid. One at the head and one at the feet, they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping, whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, "tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni." Which means teacher. (choir singing in foreign language) The Lord be with you?

- Amen.

- Let us pray. All mighty God, our intelligent heavenly Father. We offer our prayers of gratitude for many favors, for every sign of spring, for every indication that the grip of winter is broken. That new life will indeed replace the old and the dead. We thank thee for every sign that Easter has happened again this year in our

hearts, and lives. For every sign of the resurrection of civil rights, of equality, of brotherhood. We thank thee for every sign that peace will come to our torn world and for those who make these signs. We offer our hearty thanks under thee, for the life and service to Duke students, all thy servant, Dean, Mary Grace Wilson. As her retirement approaches. We are mindful of many years of Christian devotion to the welfare of tens of thousands of young women. We thank thee that she has had great love for people, that she never confused hating sin with hating the sinner, and that she has inspired all who know her to be true to their best selves. All mighty God, we offer unto thee our prayers of intercession for all thy children. We pray for Terry Sanford as he begins, the awesome duties of the presidency. Grant unto him, the continuation of that grace under stress, which he has received from thee in such abundance in the past. Grant unto him here, associates, faculty, students, and trustees who will have the fairness to cooperate with him, to believe the best about him and to give him a chance to help make this a great university. Grant unto him, wisdom, courage, and a sense of humor. Oh Lord, we pray for those who are newly married, that they may be patient with each other as well as loving. Gradually give them that happiness, which comes to those who love others as they love themselves. We pray for that growing number of thy children who are addicted to drugs, who cannot plan for tomorrow because of slavery today. Grant unto the leaders of the people that wisdom, and that concern for the welfare of others, which will lead them to solve this human problem. Heavenly Father, as we pray for others, we pray also for ourselves that our technology, and engineering maybe direct it demands better life, rather than to his early destruction. We pray thee O God to deliver us from the monstrous hypocrisy of imprisoning students who defy the law for conscience sake. While we reward postal workers and air controllers for defying the law by granting unto them pay increases and no prison. Give us O God, at least the grace to treat people equally for the same offense. Grant unto us the vivid realization that final exams will soon be upon us so that we may not waste precious hours. May we realize that the last great judgment will soon be upon all of us. When everyone shall stand before the righteous judge to give an account of this brief life, and then enter either into heaven or hell. Grant unto us the wisdom and grace to choose unfailingly Jesus Christ as Lord, Lord of this life. And as our advocate in the life to come. We make our prayer in his name, remembering the better prayer he has taught his disciples to pray, saying. 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 forever. Amen.

- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. The biblical narratives of Easter offer no uniforms starting. It's dark for whether the written testimony would stand in any court of law. But one affirmation is universal and emphatic in the language of the King James Version. It was not possible that Jesus be holden of death. Now this morning, we shall concentrate on that one word in one incident of that first Easter, it should delight the hearts of those of you who are members of any woman's liberation society. That according to all the gospels, it was a woman who first saw the risen Christ. Like a woman she mistook him for the gardener until he called her by name, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Rabboni." Thomas When first confronted with the risen Christ called him my Lord and my God. Mary Magdalene use the old Hebrew or Aramaic word for teacher. Even in the hour of his vindication. She addressed him as the rabbi of the pre crucifixion days. And I'm glad. Let's look together at this word rabbi. It means literally my great one, my great one. And Rabboni is according to the scholars, either the Aramaic form of rabbi or an intensified form of rabbi. It was,

and it is a title of respect for teachers of the law. At the least, it is the equivalent of the English, sir. And it's sometimes translated in the New Testament as master. It is a normal synonym for teacher. If he be our religious teacher, teacher is regularly used of Jesus. It's used by him over himself. Rabbi was always a word of honor. It was used to learned layman. It was even used of God himself as the teacher of Moses. Moses was to the Jews, the exemplar of a rabbi, but he was the teacher (mumbles). He was called Moshay Rabbino. Our teacher Moses, now Leo Rosten in his erudite and chuckling volume, "The Joys of Yiddish," says that, the authority of a rabbi rests on his learning, his character, his personal quality. The authority of a rabbi rests on his learning, his character, his personal quality. He is not a priest, an intermediary between God and man. He is a scholar, who as Rosten says shares his knowledge with the less learned. And then add to this delightful note. He even teaches little boys their A, B, C. Now is this what rabbi meant to Mary of Magdala when she addressed Jesus as my teacher on that first Easter morning, long, long ago. And is this what Jesus means to us? However, we must face one shocking fact about Jesus. For many of our young contemporaries. He was over 30 years of age when he began his public teaching. Now that almost automatically blackballed him for them, though understandably not for me. In fact, sometime back a group of divinity students asked me if there were, but one thing they should remember about Jesus, what was it? I told them that it was, he kept his mouth shut till he was 30. And then I added quite gratuitously that they might well go and do likewise, (preacher chuckles) but they didn't. But now let's pick up Leo Rosten's three points regarding the authority of a rabbi and find if Jesus qualified, A man of learning was the first emphasis. Jesus was able on more than one occasion to cite the law, and the prophets to his opponents discomfiture. He could argue like a scribe, that is like an exegetical expert when confronted with the Pharisees. But this was neither his primary interests nor his preferred method. He was a synagogue Jew who learned and loved the tradition of his people. But he constantly sought for the spirit behind, and within the letter of the law, rather than enforcement of the literal application. When he was reminded that the punishment for adultery was stoning to death, he conceded the fact. Then he suggested the impossible. That the man without sin cast the first stone. And those who heard him gas and went away without pitching. He talked about God and he made God an everyday matter. This was partly a matter of style because he associated God with stories about a strayed sheep and a mislead coin. And two lost boys who happened to be brothers. He was always talking about the kingdom of God, but he described it in terms of farmers planting, and fishermen on the job and trees in the vineyard. And yeast at work in a batch of dough and 10 bridesmaids, five of whom never made the wedding. And two men praying in the temple, neither of whom really knew who he was. This is God in the commonplaces, in the here and now and not somewhere back in the time of Moses or David or Amos. This is God alive and present, not embalmed in a holy scroll for purposes of adoration. Jesus the rabbi knew as a universal truth. If not as a linguistic fact, the the Latin verb doceo, to teach like its Greek counterpart, didasko. That verb governance two accusative, the subject taught, and the person taught never one without the other, all was both simultaneously. A rabbi knows his stuff, and he knows his pupil. He does not just teach a subject. He does not just teach disciples. He teaches both at once. He is the first mark and the prime secret of good teaching. Jesus was our rabbi who knew God and the common people of Galilee Leo Rosten also stressed the personal qualities of the rabbi and their impact on his listeners. Now, as a Jew, Jesus was both practical and picturesque. There were times when he called a spade a spade. There were even times when he called a spade a shovel. As when he addressed Peter as Satan. And yet he could paint word pictures of the realm of God that left these hearers, wet eye and longing for more. He used humor about a man hunting for a speck of sawdust in his brother's eye. When there was a plank sticking out

in his own eye. How close can you get to a person with a plank sticking out of your optic? And remember, it's a carpenter who's talking about this. He was clear and colorful and relevant, less of word, and fun, and sane, and serious, then all together worthwhile he had personality. And so he was a personality. Here are two opinions about him as a teacher. The first is the conclusion of the temple police who had gone to arrest him and came back without him, nobody ever speak as this man speak. And the second is tacked on to the end of the Sermon on the Mount. He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. Which may be interpreted he knows what he's talking about. He's not like the average preacher, perhaps I'd better just leave it at that for that point. There was a third point in Leo Rosten's analysis of the rabbi character. This is other than personality, which is the obvious output effect one has on others. Character is inward. It is that which is engraved on the inner depths of a person's personhood. The Greek word, (speaking in Greek) means the engraver, worldly engraving tool or that which is engrave. So that becomes the peculiar and distinctive nature of a person. Jesus character was a goodwill accepted from God, and given to others, all others. That was what was engrave on his heart and spoke through his personality. So that others sense the impact of it, and loved him or hated him because he was so powerful that he could not be ignored or poo-pooed, or sidetrack. Had to be accepted or rejected that rabbi had to be followed or done away with, because he presented an example of conscience inaction. Conscience inaction that was the character. The character instinct, not of his teaching. Learning personality character, Jesus was rabbi, my teacher for many people in Galilee and Judea. Now how do we respond to this interpretation of the role of Jesus? Well, it depends some book on our cultural heritage. If we are Jews, we can understand even appreciate why Jesus would be called rabbi. If we are Scott, we would agree why not a Scott's Presbyterian is either a New Testament Jew or an Old Testament Christian. The four men who used to dominate the life of the Scottish villages, where the laird, that is the landowner, the doctor, the dominie, that's the schoolmaster, and the minister. They made up the quadrumvirate which stamped a rural community with its distinctiveness. We used to be strapped to school, a leather belt on the palm regularly, daily, thrice daily, and often, or anything and everything being late, being unprepared, looking bored, dipping the girls pigtails into inkwells, speaking too loudly, speaking too softly. Did we ever tell anyone at home that we had been strapped at school? Don't be silly. We would have been crashed at home for being walloped at school. (audience laughing) Our parents believed in the teacher much more than they believed in their children. I found the same attitude in Japan, sitting cross legged on the floor in an ancient Tokyo eating house with an old and my student. He and I were served by our own maidservant who sat before us. At one point in the long meal, my friend began a conversation with our maid in fluent Japanese. During it the waitress began to look at me until she finally turned, and bowed her forehead to the floor in front of my knees. Now, what was I supposed to do? Pass it on the head. I recalled some words of John Buchan Tweedsmuir or the Governor General of Canada. If there's no good reason for moving, there's a good reason for standing still. I sat, immovable. She straightened up, gave me the loveliest smile and then went on to serving us. I asked my students what it was all about. He told me that he had told her that I was his teacher from America. Hence her gesture of reverence for me, the order of pre-sentence in Japan was the emperor, the parent, the teacher. Now there is no Jewish, no rabbinical influence there. This is just a general deduction from life. The teacher is a hurdle of great right. Is this true in the USA? Yes, spottily, more spottily today than before. But read after determines, Mark Hopkins sat on one end of a log and a firm boy on the other. Read Robert P Tristram Coffin, america was schoolmasters. I think of Jim Muilenburg of Union Seminary in New York. So exciting his class with a lecture on Moses, taking off his shoes at the burning bush. That next morning, outside the classroom were

40 pairs of shoes, neatly arranged down the hall, and on the steps of the great curving staircase. While the students sat inside in their stocking. So Pastor Muilenburg was a rabbi. He still is. So why don't you resolve that you will sit at the feet of Jesus as your rabbi this Eastertide. Read the gospels where the commentary, read a biography of Jesus they are all kinds, and someone in the divinity school, or in the department of religion or on the chaplain staff will help you select one. To begin with concentrate on the parables, and the dialogues between Jesus, and folk like the woman at the well, and Nicodemus, who came to Jesus under cover of darkness, and Martha and Mary. Don't start with the Sermon on the Mount. That's a post-graduate course in Christian ethics. Perhaps you'll come to know him as his disciple, and then maybe as an adherent in his party. And per chance finally, as a fellow worker in his course. And if you won't listen to me, suggesting such a study perspective on life, and what do you make of this paragraph? There are certain things that are age needs, and certain things it should avoid. It needs compassion and I wish that men should be happy. It needs the desire for knowledge, and the determination to wish to pleasant myth, needs above all courageous hope. And the impulse creativeness, the root of the matter is a very simple and old fashioned thing. I think so simple that I'm almost ashamed to mention it for fear of the derives of smile with which why syndics will greet my word. The thing, I mean, please forgive me for mentioning it, is love, Christian love or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. The thing, I mean, please forgive me for mentioning it, is love, Christian love or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. Why are you so embarrassed to recommend it, because he's Bertrand Russell, no professing Christian in any Orthodoxy, writing on the impact of science, on society, the sermon as you realize, but other than to some extent, to confess to your fatigue, and a vowel of my confidence in the teaching ministry, even from, especially from the pulpit, it is a declaration of the unending satisfaction of being a disciple of the rabbi Jesus, my teacher, my master, my great one. Do you recall what the original meaning of rabbi was? My great one. I like that. Which not exactly Son of God, a very good, a very good. What he's looking in the same direction satisfies me. I'm glad that on the first Easter morning, Mary spontaneously called him rabboni. It's a good name. Let's sing a hymn to him. Number 75. Thou are the way the truth, the life. Amen. (soft instrumental music) (choir singing in foreign language) (choir singing in foreign language) All mighty God, we quiet our hearts, lifting them as thine before thee, insofar as we are able to dedicate thy whole creation to thy glory. The animals and the birds, our technology, our money, more importantly our loyalties and our selves for the glory of Christ. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ be among us, and rest upon us evermore. (choir singing in foreign language)