

Easter Sunday: April 20, 2025

The Resurrection of Jesus - Easter celebration

Jesus' Resurrection crowns the story of all four Gospels. In Luke's gospel account, Jesus' disappearance from the tomb is only the initial evidence of his rising. He soon appears to his disciples, eats in their presence and invites them to touch his risen body. Many other proofs testify to the miracle of Easter.

"Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. **He saw and believed.** (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. (John 20: 8-10).

Easter readings indicate *the many stages of coming to terms with reality of Christ's resurrection*. Mary Magdalene was afraid, Peter and John were surprised on seeing the empty tomb, and then they remembered what the scripture had said about him. John saw the linen clothes, and he believed that Jesus was risen!

"In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again. Then they remembered his words". (Luke 24: 5-8)

In the above passage, two angels asked the women why they were looking in a tomb for someone alive. The women either had forgotten or did not realize the meaning of Jesus' promise to rise again. *Some people today seem to be looking for God among the dead.* They seem to have a lifeless faith and go to lifeless churches. They study the Bible as a chore and go to church as if going to a memorial service. But Jesus is not among the dead – he is alive! He reigns in heaven and in the hearts of Christians, and He is the head of his Church.

Resurrection is about seeing our world in a new way. Early that Easter morning, Mary Magdalene did not find what she was looking for, the dead body of Jesus. But she found something better than she could have imagined: the Risen Jesus. Sometimes, the things we think we need most are not granted to us. Instead, we get an experience of God's new ways of working in the world. That's the power of the Resurrection. When those moments come, we must spread the news—just as Mary Magdalene did: "I have seen the Lord!" (Jn 20:18)

Where do you look for Jesus? Do you expect him to be alive in the world and the church? How lively is your FAITH in Christ? Look for signs of Christ's power – they are all around you. Thank God for all the many lively, warm-hearted, grace-filled, exuberant ministers, exciting volunteers, happy altar servers, cheerful singers, happy faces, wonderful pastoral team, and many others who energize the St. Pius X community. Did you notice the joys and excitement on the faces of our newly initiated members of St Pius X church at the Easter Vigil celebration? ***We are Easter people. Jesus Christ is alive! Alleluia is the new song!***

The Resurrection of Christ is the basis and central fact of our Christian Faith. It is the greatest of the miracles, for it proves that Jesus is alive, and Jesus God. On this fact, the church is built; without it, the church would not exist today. Christians can look different from one another and hold widely varying beliefs about politics, life choices, and even theology. However, one central belief unites and inspires all true Christians: Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Jesus' resurrection is unique. Many religions have strong ethical systems, concepts about paradise about the afterlife, and various holy scriptures. Only Christianity has a God who became human, literally died for his people, and was raised again in power and glory to rule his church forever.

WHY IS THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS (EASTER) SO IMPORTANT?

1 The Resurrection (Easter) is the guarantee of our own resurrection. Jesus assured Martha at the tomb of Lazarus: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me will live even though he/she dies..." (Jn

11:25-26). Now we know that death has been conquered and we, too, will be raised from the dead to live forever with Jesus.

2 The kingdom of God has broken into the earth's history. Our world is now headed for redemption, not disaster. God's mighty power is at work destroying sin, creating new lives, and preparing us for Jesus' second coming.

3. The Resurrection (Easter) gives us hope and encouragement in this world of pain, sorrow, and tears. It helps us find meaning even in great tragedy.

No matter what happens to us as we walk with the Lord, the resurrection gives us hope for the future. It reminds us that life is worth living. God's power that brought Jesus back from the dead is available to us so that we can live in an evil world. It also gives us the strength to fight against temptations and freedom from unnecessary worries and fears.

4 The Resurrection (Easter) gives meaning to our prayers and our sacraments: It supports our belief in the Real Presence of the Risen Jesus in and around us, in His Church, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in Heaven, hearing our prayers, and so gives meaning to our personal as well as our communal prayers.

5 The Resurrection (Easter) gives authority to the church's witness in the world. Look at the sermons of the early Evangelists in the Book of Acts of the Apostles: the Apostles' central theme and most important message was the proclamation that Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, and "we are witnesses to this". Acts 10:34, 37-43.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10: 39-43). And St. Paul writes: "Jesus is Lord! He is risen!" (Rom 10:9).

6 The Resurrection (Easter) assures us that Jesus is alive and ruling his kingdom. Jesus Christ is not a figure from a legend; he entered history in real time. Alleluia, Christ is Alive!

"You know? Jesus IS alive!" When, in an interview, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York was asked who is the most influential person in his life, he answered, without hesitation, "**Jesus Christ**, of course." A bit perplexed, the interviewing reporter clarified, "I meant someone who is alive." To which the Cardinal answered, with all the surety of not merely belief, but first-hand experience, "You know? Jesus IS alive!" (story by Fr. Bill Nicholas).

Happy Easter, everyone.
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