



Bringing Home the Word

Easter Sunday (B)
April 4, 2021

Victory!

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Fr. Lorenzo Ricci, SJ, placed the painting, *The Resurrection* by Domenico Cresti, in the chapel commemorating the spot outside Rome where Ignatius had a vision confirming his desire to ask the pope to found the Jesuit order. It's significant because Fr. Lorenzo enthroned this painting as a symbolic act just before his order was suppressed throughout the Portuguese and Spanish Empires. It was one of their darkest hours.

We all have dark moments in our histories. It seems death will swallow us; that God has abandoned us, and there is no solution. The darkness in the painting

suggests just that—the world of darkness and despair without the light of Christ. The soldiers sleep, the cold world waits below, and a once-strong trunk is dry and sapped of vigor.

Above, the beautiful Christ figure is surrounded in light, while he hoists the victory standard: the blood-red cross of martyrdom set upon the pure white of resurrection. He, like a new Moses, is leading them into the promised land of eternal life.

These contrasting scenes of darkness and light are the message of the painting and of the resurrection itself. Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene had locked themselves at home, engulfed in darkness, fear, and sadness. The next morning, they arrive to the tomb only to find it open and the body of their beloved Savior gone. Victory was being won even as they slept.

Entrust your ways to the Lord and he will act. God is at work winning your salvation! Do not let hope be vanquished! Hold on. Trust in him. Victory is right around the corner! +

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A Word from Pope Francis

You cannot give [courage] to yourself, but you can receive it as a gift. All you have to do is open your heart in prayer and roll away, however slightly, that stone placed at the entrance to your heart so that Jesus' light can enter....With you, Lord, we will be tested but not shaken.

—Easter Vigil Homily, April 11, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- Do I trust in Christ's power, which I cannot see, more than the problems that I can see?
- Do I believe God is a good Father and only permits that which leads to greater glory for both of us?

Sunday Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

[Peter said,] "He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge."

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

John 20:1-9

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.

Fifty Days of Easter

By Kathleen M. Basi

On Easter Sunday, anything seems possible. The triumph of life over death and heaven over hell seems to resound throughout a world poised on the cusp of spring.

But it's hard to hold on to the euphoria of resurrection for fifty days. White lilies fade and are discreetly removed from the altar, the spring rush of baseball and soccer starts. As the planet spins one day to the next, we get caught up in ordinary life until one day that newness of purpose is gone altogether.

Faith is like a muscle: healthier when exercised. In the years after the resurrection, the Church flourished because Christianity wasn't just something you did on Sundays and holidays. It was something radical—something so powerful, so threatening to the establishment that claiming it could get you fed to wild animals. That kind of commitment changes what you do and think and say every day.



You and I will probably never face execution for our beliefs, but the reality of the resurrection should still impact the way we live—not just on the holy day itself, but throughout the Easter season and beyond. It should illuminate what endeavors are worthwhile and which are not. It should challenge us to temper

our anger and expand our willingness to sacrifice for others. In short, it should challenge us to do something.

Nobody needs a longer to-do list. But living the faith doesn't require commitments of epic proportions. Imagine what could happen if every one of us celebrated the fifty days of Easter by doing one thing each day to grow, demonstrate, or share our faith.

It doesn't have to be earth shattering in importance. It just needs to be real. Set aside five minutes for quiet, contemplative prayer. Count to ten before reacting to that inflammatory tweet. Dig into the mystery of death and resurrection with your children. Read the

Acts of the Apostles and figure out one concrete way you can imitate their fervor in the context of your life. Read a book about the saints. Pick up that fast-food bag blowing around the mall parking lot. Send a donation to a crisis-pregnancy center. Buy a can of coffee and deliver it to a homeless shelter.

Doing one thing every day may not change the world, but it will change us. Our souls and our bodies are made to work in harmony to reflect God's image.

Our actions shape our inner reality. The more we act as Christ would have us act, the more our view of the world reflects his. In short, by doing as God does, we become more like God.

And that *can* change the world. +



Lord, your resurrection pierces the darkness of doubt and fear. May the power of your resurrection help me to deepen my love for you and all people.

From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day of Lent and Easter*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

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but it will change us.*

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 5-10

Monday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 2:14, 22–33 / Mt 28:8–15

Tuesday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 2:36–41 / Jn 20:11–18

Wednesday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 3:1–10 / Lk 24:13–35

Thursday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 3:11–26 / Lk 24:35–48

Friday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 4:1–12 / Jn 21:1–14

Saturday, Octave of Easter:
Acts 4:13–21 / Mk 16:9–15