



Bringing Home the Word

Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of the Lord | April 1, 2018

Transformed by Christ

By Mary Katharine Deeley

We've all been waiting for this. For six weeks we've focused on letting go of our treasure to help others, taking in a little less food, and reaching out to God a little more, all so that we might in some small way prepare for this day—the greatest celebration of our Church year.

So now, after the alleluias have been sung, the baptismal vows repeated, and the Easter lamb or ham eaten, it's time to ask ourselves, "What was all that preparation for? How have I changed?"

When I was young, I gave up candy or little treats for Lent, but after Easter I happily went back to eating candy and carried on as before. As a young adult, I began using Lent to correct bad habits. I had a little more success keeping those at bay after Easter but, I confess, I didn't see myself as transformed.

"How have I drawn closer to Christ through this Lent? How will I show forth the glory of his resurrection in my life? How will I do these things?" These are good questions for all of us to ask as this Easter winds down.

Once they realized what had happened, the early Christians couldn't keep it to themselves. They preached about Jesus' death and resurrection wherever they went, witnessed to the change he'd made in their lives, and tried to live differently. They invited others to join them. Jesus calls us to do no less.

How have Lent and Easter and the memory of Christ's death and resurrection changed you? How will you live out that change? +

A Word From Pope Francis

We Christians are all called to communicate this message of resurrection to those we meet, especially to those who suffer, to those who are alone, to those who find themselves in precarious conditions, to the sick, to refugees, to the marginalized.

—Regina Caeli,
April 10, 2016



Sunday Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37–43

He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God

Col 3:1–4 or 1 Cor 5:6b–8

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

Jn 20:1–9 or Mk 16:1–7

Then the other disciple also went in ... and he saw and believed.

- 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?

REFLECTION
QUESTIONS




Learning From the Cross

By Richard Rohr O.F.M.

It is no accident that Catholics have made the cross the image we look upon. In the revelation of the cross, great truth becomes obvious: The mystery of the rejection, passion, death, and rising of Jesus is the fuel of history. We are wounded, then transformed.

For the first 1,100 years of Christianity an idea was popular that Jesus needed to die for us. As many saw it, Jesus gave his life as a ransom. That ransom had to be paid—some thought to the devil. Saint Anselm then introduced the notion that it was to the Father that Jesus made satisfaction. By dying, Jesus returned the love God deserved from the human race—the love that Adam, Eve, and their descendants had failed to give.

I believe we are now finally ready to accept that Jesus' sacrifice was to transform us, to reveal a God who is self-giving love. Jesus did not need to die. There was no debt to be paid. Jesus died to reveal the nature of God.

By his death on the cross Jesus does not project the evil of humanity onto anyone. He becomes the forgiving victim of human history. It is for good reason that we have dated history from Christ's entrance onto the human stage. Something is different with Jesus' arrival.

Winning Message

The perspective of the cross is that of the victim, the rejected one. After we have gone through our own Passover we come out on the other side, not just alive but changed. We learn who it is that really sustains us. We find ourselves living a life that is not our own: "Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). It's a new kind of life we are living, a life of compassion.

For many, the message of the cross seems neither practical nor relevant. We see it as something Jesus did to prove God's love for us. Jesus becomes the heavenly Hercules who endured unimaginable suffering. But that is only half the mystery. What the mystery of the cross reveals is a different way of living, a way of transformation.

The cross is about fighting without becoming a casualty yourself. The cross is about being the victory instead of just winning a victory. It is not about passivity or giving up. It is a way of winning that tries to bring your opponent along with you. It is refusing the simplistic win-loss scenario and holding out for a possible win-win. The cross is refusing to hate or needing to humiliate the other, which only continues the pattern that many have always followed.

Jesus' Calling Power

This is why the cross has turned around history and given us a new story. The cross utterly reframes humanity, forcing us to redefine success and victory. The way of the cross resets the agenda to the way of nonviolence.

When we stand in the mystery of Jesus we can never stand righteously. We have taken on the mind of Christ. We preach Jesus but, more important, we become Jesus. We recognize that Jesus has calling power over us. In return, Jesus asks that we follow him on our journey of transformation. Your job and my job is to be Jesus, yet I admit I don't know how to be Jesus. He has to do it in me, through me. All I can do, all we can do, is get out of the way and let the mystery of the cross transform us. +

PRAYER

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

WEEKDAY READINGS

April 2–7, 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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