

I arose and am still with you — Alleluia!

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Easter Story Beyond Human Comprehending

The story of Easter is a question of faith.

Pilate on the eve of that event asked contemptuously, "Truth! What does that mean?"

Yet the truth of the Easter story is still able to take hold of our hearts today and root us in a faith which has survived twenty centuries.

And it can help a man to survive the heartaches and anguish inevitable in everyone's life.

The story of Easter as told in Scripture begins before dawn and continues until after dark.

There are the women, led by Mary Magdalene, who come to the tomb early in the morning. To their dismay, they find the tomb empty and the Magdalene sinks to the ground to weep while her companions scurry back up the hill to the still sleepy city.

In her solitude, Mary Magdalene then sees the risen Saviour but fails to recognize Him in His glory. He calls her by name and she responds, "Rabboni — My Master!"

Her encounter in the garden is a story repeated countless times as each disciple of this loving Lord experiences in his devotion a similar relationship more intimate than any earthly friendship.

Peter and John are next to arrive at the tomb.

Peter is puzzled but John, we are told, "saw and believed."

That just about summarizes the condition of the disciples that day and ever since — puzzlement at first, then faith radiant like a dawn.

As St. John found faith early Easter morning, so two other disciples found it that evening.

They set out from Jerusalem toward Emmaus, a seven mile trek, soon after reports began circulating about the risen Saviour.

St. Luke in his Gospel tells us "that Jesus Himself also drew near and went along with them" but they failed to recognize Him. They were amazed that He didn't seem to know about the events of the recent days. They described their hopes that Jesus of Nazareth would be the Messiah but that their hopes died when He did . . . and now there were rumors "that He is alive."

Then He explained to them the ancient Scriptures which foretold that the Messiah had "to suffer these things before entering into His glory." The conversation continued until they were near the end of their journey near the end of the day.

He went into the inn with them to have supper with them. As He had done at the Supper on Holy Thursday, so again "He took the bread and blessed and broke and began handing it to them." And then, like John, they too saw and believed "and He vanished from their sight."

Where there is faith, there is no further need for a miraculous Presence.

He had explained to them the true significance of His life and death — an understanding they never could have had without revelation.

The story of Easter is a truth beyond human comprehending.

And what this great Lord did for Mary Magdalene in the garden and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, as His grace worked in the puzzled heart of Peter and burst with sudden glory in the heart of John, so He will also do for us.

When God at the Incarnation took the robe of our weak human nature He took it never to let it go.

This, at least, is the fact of Easter — that God's eternal Son was also always Mary's Child, — to be forever our brother, our companion, our abiding proof that flesh can climb to heaven.

—Father Henry A. Atwill



The thoughts of Good Friday and Easter Sunday are depicted in this painting by Salvador Dalí.

Easter Feast to Begin With Saturday Vigil Rites

Lent's forty days will climax with dramatic Easter Vigil rites Holy Saturday night and solemn Masses Sunday morning.

White vestments, flower-decked altars and festal music will replace the somber chants and robes of the Church's penitential season.

Bishop Kearney will celebrate High Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral Easter Sunday at 11 a.m.

Bishop Casey, Cathedral rector, will preside at Holy Saturday's Vigil ceremony at 7:30 p.m. and at the solemn Mass at 8:45 p.m.

Eighteen converts to the Catholic faith will be baptized at the Cathedral's Vigil rite.

Parish bulletins should be consulted for precise time of Confessions and other ceremonies for Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

Catholics who receive Holy Communion at the Vigil Mass may also receive the Blessed Sacrament again at Easter Sunday morning Mass.

Bishop Kearney has granted Catholics in the Rochester Diocese a dispensation from Lenten laws of fast and abstinence on Holy Saturday.

Census to Start In Inner-City

First visits in the diocesan-wide Catholic census will be undertaken next week in Rochester's inner city by students of St. Bernard's and St. Andrew's Seminaries.

Approximately 80 students of the two schools have volunteered a portion of their Easter vacation period in order to get the census project under way.

All seminarians will travel in pairs. Only the fifth and sixth (college) classes are included among the volunteers from St. Andrew's Seminary.

Next week's census effort will be a "pilot project," preceding the census program for the remainder of Monroe County.

"Census Day" for parishes throughout the county, which will involve visits to all dwellings by more than 7,000 volunteer parish enumerators, is scheduled Sunday afternoon, May 23.

Census programs in the remaining 83 parishes of the 12-county Diocese will be on a staggered schedule from May 3 to June 9.

Specific portions of Rochester's "inner city" area have been exempted from canvassing by parish enumerators, with the visits slated to be made by seminarians and by groups of laymen. It is one of these downtown areas which the seminarians will endeavor to cover next week. Its boundaries (including both sides of street mentioned) are as follows:

Beginning at the junction of Main Street West and Genesee Street, east on Main Street West and Main Street East to University Avenue; south on Scio Street to East Avenue; east on East Avenue to Union Street South; south on Union Street to Howell Street; west on Howell Street

to the Genesee River; south along the Genesee River to Edinburgh Street; west on Edinburgh Street to Clarissa Street; south on Clarissa Street to Bronson Avenue; west on Bronson Avenue to Genesee Street; north on Genesee Street to the point of beginning on Main Street West.

Bishop Kearney has pointed out that the census is to obtain general information about the religious practices of baptized Catholics, in order to update parish and diocesan statistics. Although every dwelling will be visited, information is being sought only from Catholics.

Parish leaders throughout the Diocese are now recruiting workers for the census programs in their parishes, scheduled during May and June.

Polish Prelate Critical of U.S. in Vietnam

Berlin — (NC) — Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski has criticized U.S. bombings in North Vietnam as part of what he called the modern world's tendency to "solve all problems by means of death."

Reports here say that in an address to physicians in Warsaw, the Polish primate said of U.S. action:

"There is a nation which is being crushed into the mud with enormous bombs . . . to support doubtful reasons of state, and not being allowed to decide for itself."

Cardinal Wyszynski also denounced abortion, which is legal in Poland, as "a policy of death."

Chemical War Criticized

Auckland, N.Z. — (RNS) — "Nobody was ever converted to democracy by seeing his friends or his enemies fried to phosphorus," said Zealandia, the New Zealand Roman Catholic weekly, in commenting on use of phosphorus bombs in Vietnam.

It recalled the reported explanation that "white phosphorus, an anti-personnel weapon, burns immediately on exposure to air and cannot be extinguished except by submersion in oil."

"Add the thought that U.S. forces also use napalm and other highly inflammable materials," said Zealandia, "and you have a picture that falls short of Hiroshima only in the extent of the damage."

"It is true that the North Vietnamese are supporting, and perhaps even partly fighting, the war in South Vietnam. But what have the deluded peasants of North Vietnam done that justifies such horrible reprisals?"

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German Bishops Warn On Common Worship

Berlin — (RNS) — A joint statement issued by the German Roman Catholic hierarchy cautioned that Catholics may not engage in common worship services with Non-Catholics.

The bishops said nothing must be done which would create the impression that a common Christian community existed, thus creating confusion among Catholic believers.

They also ruled out so-called ecumenical services, "such as those recently conducted in other countries and occasionally copied in Germany with great publicity through the press and television," because "they blur the borderline between permitted and desirable joint prayer

meetings and worship services proper."

The bishops noted that last January the Bishops' Conference of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (EVLKD) had approved a statement reminding the Church's clergy that a prerequisite for ecumenical encounter was "loyalty to one's own Church and a knowledge of Roman ecumenism."

The decree on ecumenism approved by the Second Vatican Council last November declared that "nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism, in which the purity of Catholic doctrine suffers loss and its assured genuine meaning is clouded."

The decree said that "in certain special circumstances, such as the prescribed prayers of unity" and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable, that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren."

Church Penalty For Evil Films

Vatican City — (RNS) — Osservatore Della Domenica, Vatican City weekly, carried an article urging excommunication of Catholics who produce or assist in the production of immoral films.

Msr. Ferdinando Lambroschini, a professor at the Lateran University, said there were "far lesser sins" for which the penalty of excommunication was invoked.

Father de Vaux's Question:

Can a Historian be a Believer?

The noted Dominican Father Roland de Vaux, famous in the world of Scripture scholars for his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, last week linked two Rochester seminaries for a first-of-its-kind ecumenical evening.

He spoke at Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery to an audience representing a cross-section of religious denominations.

He outlined the difficulties historians face when they read the Bible with its dramatic reports of events in the history of ancient Israel.

"Can an honest historian be a sincere believer?" Father de Vaux asked.

He then traced the scattered evidence in ancient history about the Israelites, ancestors of today's Jews. Facts, he admitted, are few and often enigmatic.

The Bible, he then said, is written from a different vantage point than that of a modern historical writer. Authors today, as in antiquity, could only observe and report facts as they witnessed them.

The Bible, he said, is written from God's vantage point.

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He compared the two aspects of history to a tapestry — our perceptivity is limited to the underside of history's tapestry. We recognize the pattern but only in a quite confused sort of way, but God gave the biblical authors a glimpse of the top side where all the threads are woven into a clearly detailed picture.

History and faith run parallel, are partners, said Father de Vaux, "they are not in conflict."

In addition to the public lecture Wednesday, April 7, he also spoke to students at St. Bernard's Seminary and Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Faculty members of the two schools honored Father de Vaux at a dinner at the University Club Wednesday evening.

He was one of the first scholars to decipher the scrolls found by a Bedouin lad in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947. The scrolls date back to the first century and contain Scrip-

ture texts besides details of a Jewish sect called the Essenes who had a "monastery" in the desert area south of Jerusalem.

The scrolls had to be painstakingly unraveled — a task in which Colgate's Scripture professor Dr. James Sanders helped when he was a student under Father de Vaux at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem.

The priest is in the United States this year as a Harvard Divinity School faculty member.



Scripture professors at two seminaries welcomed Father Roland de Vaux to three-day stay in Rochester last week. Father Joseph Brennan of St. Bernard's Seminary and Dr. James Sanders of Colgate Rochester Divinity School arranged the visit of the noted biblical scholar, a Dominican priest of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem.