

# We Are Resurrection People

By Msgr. William H. Shannon

"You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, the one who was crucified. He has been raised up; he is not here." (Gospel of the Vigil Mass of Easter). These words spoken by an angel are the Gospel. When I say this I do not mean that they are a passage from the Gospel or even the climax of the Gospel. They are the heart of the Gospel. For the heart of the Gospel is the proclamation of the Good News that Jesus has been raised by His Father.

The books of the Gospel that we read were written many years after this event and every page of these books is bathed in the light of this Easter event. Everything penned by the Gospel writers about Jesus was filtered through the prism of their experience of Easter — their experience of the Risen Jesus alive and among them.

There are some people who are tempted to believe that, while the Resurrection may be the climax of the Gospel, there is yet a Gospel that stands on its own feet and may be understood before we pass to the Resurrection. The first disciples of Jesus did not think so; for them the Gospel without the Resurrection was not merely a Gospel without its final chapter,

the Gospel without the Resurrection was no Gospel at all.

So when they came to write the Gospels, the whole story of the ministry of Jesus that precedes the Resurrection was aglow with the realization that they were writing about the Risen One who was in their midst.

This centrality of the Easter experience is also true of the faith-life of the Christian. Our belief in Jesus is not simply a belief in His religious and ethical teachings, lofty and sublime as they may be. Our Faith in Jesus — if it is faith at all — is our belief that God raised Jesus from the dead. Belief in the Resurrection is not one among many things that we believe. It is the heart of everything we believe about Jesus. Everything else in Christian faith derives from belief in the Resurrection and is colored by that belief. Yes, the Gospel, the Good News, is one single event that sheds its light on all else that is Christian. There is no other Gospel than the Gospel: "God raised Jesus from the dead."

The Gospel is coupled with a promise: not only has Jesus been raised, but as Risen Lord He will meet us in Galilee. So, the angelic message to the woman is: "Go now and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He

## INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

is going ahead of you to Galilee, where you will see him just as he told you." And the Galilee where He promises to meet us is the Galilee of our lives, the Galilee of our world, but a Galilee transformed by His presence as the Risen Lord. Galilee for us is Rochester, Auburn, Elmira, the world. It is in the Galilee of our lives that we meet the Risen Jesus as He promised. It is in the Galilee of our world that we experience His presence and, therefore, His peace and joy.

It is because we go to meet Him in Galilee that we, like the disciples, live new lives and become new creatures. Risen life for us does not have to wait the event of death. Because Jesus is in our midst, giving us life, we are already Resurrection People.


Is this not the meaning of what we celebrate every time we gather for the Eucharist? The Risen Jesus is among us. He says: "This is My Body broken for you. Take and eat. This is My Blood shed for you. Take and drink." What do these words mean except that He is saying, 'I am your food; I am your source of life. I am in your midst giving you life — the risen life that I alone can give.' Every Eucharist is Easter once again made a reality in our lives.

The proclamation of Easter, then, is an event and a promise. The event that colors all our existence is: Jesus raised from the dead by His Father. The promise that gives us risen life is: 'Go to Galilee. There you will meet me as I promised.'

**SPECIAL INVITATION**  
"Jesus of Nazareth requests the honor of your presence at a dinner given by him" at St. Charles Borromeo Church, 3000 Dewey Ave., tomorrow at 8:30 p.m. Invitations phrased this way by the parish liturgy committee were distributed recently to call attention to a special liturgy to celebrate Holy Thursday which will include a re-enactment of the first Holy Thursday.

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**WORD FOR SUNDAY**



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 20:1-9. (R1) Acts 10:34, 37-43. (R2) Col. 3:1-4.

Easter Sunday is the great Sunday of the liturgical year. It begins Eastertide, which follows upon the high tide of Salvation History: Holy Thursday (the institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders); Good Friday (redemption: the passage from death to life); and Holy Saturday (the sabbath rest after the new creation).

The Sundays after Easter are now called the Sundays of Easter. There are seven such Sundays (including Easter). The major theme of Eastertide is joy.

During this Paschal Season, the first readings will not be from the Old Testament. They will be taken from the Acts (this year, Peter's sermons). The second readings are from the First Letter of John the Apostle — an appropriate choice, because John unfolds the new life and love baptized Christians should live. The gospel passages will be from John's Gospel. His accounts of the resurrection will be used on Easter and the two succeeding Sundays. For the remaining Sundays of Eastertide, the story of the Good Shepherd and the farewell discourse of Jesus will be used; for they describe the intimacy of Jesus with His own.

According to a Persian fable, the earth in the beginning was a great barren plain, without a single tree or plant, much like a moonscape. God sent an angel to scatter the choicest seeds over this wasteland. But Satan was determined to destroy the work of the Lord, so he buried all the seeds in the soil. Then he caused the rain to fall and the sun to shine in order to rot the seeds away.

But evil recoils on the evildoer. The buried seeds rotted indeed, only to germinate and spring up into countless varieties of plants

and flowers. From heaven came a voice: "Thou Fool, that which you sowed, comes to life only if it dies."

The enemies of Christ killed Him with the feeling that they had finished Him, they had put Him away forever. But death was but the door to His final and glorious victory — and ours!

For some the resurrection means that the teachings of Jesus are immortal and will live forever.

For others the resurrection means that the spirit of Jesus will never die but affect all men till the end of time.

For still others the resurrection means poetry, that as the dead earth bursts to life in Spring, so through Jesus hope is reborn in the despairing heart.


For the believer, however, resurrection means the gateway to life is death! It means that as the field must be fertilized with rotted death to become fertile, so our daily dying to selfishness and self-centeredness lead ultimately to resurrection.

Though no one was present when Christ rose from the dead, though Magdalene, Peter, John saw only an empty tomb on Easter morn, yet we know He is risen. As I was not awake to see the sun rise this morning, yet I know as surely as I exist that it did — because the world is flooded with light — so I know Christ has risen, because I see in the world a Church two thousand years young and having multitudinous men and women dying to self and rising to help others as brothers. Alleluia!

I received an appeal to append a list of the readings of the daily masses to my weekly column. I feel this is unnecessary in view of the fact that one can obtain a very fine weekday missal which is permanent to the year 2,000, from The Daughters of St. Paul, 50 St. Paul's Ave., Jamaica Plain, Boston, Ma. 02130. The price is \$11.

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