

Sunday, April 5, 2015

Easter Sunday

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Acts 10:34, 37-43 2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4
Responsorial: Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Gospel: John 20:1-9

Allowing the Resurrection of Jesus to Strengthen Our Faith

He had to rise from the dead. (John 20:9)

At the first miracle, the wedding at Cana, Jesus turned water into wine. John said the miracle “revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him” (John 2:11). The miracle revealed Jesus’ glory, and that revelation inspired belief.

This basic pattern of a sign revealing glory, and the glory inspiring belief occurs again and again in John’s Gospel. For instance, the healing of the official’s son was “the second sign that Jesus did,” and it led the official’s entire family to believe (John 4:54). When Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, those who saw the sign said, “This is truly the Prophet” (6:14). When he healed the blind man, the man said, “I do believe, Lord” (9:38). When he raised Lazarus from the dead, “the crowd went to meet him, because they heard that he had done this sign” (12:18).

The greatest of all these signs is Jesus’ resurrection. Easter Sunday is the most important day in all of history. It’s the culmination of God’s magnificent plan of salvation and the foundation of our whole faith as Catholics. Yet as vital a sign as this is, how much do we really know it? How much do we let this sign bring us to deeper and more joyful faith?

Don’t be content with what you know! Even if you know a lot, seek out more insight and revelation. Today is the perfect day to set aside some time to read at least one account of Jesus’ resurrection. Read all four if you can! Be like Mary Magdalene, and run to the tomb. Stay there until you hear Jesus calling you by name. Honor this day. Celebrate it. Remember that it isn’t just about Jesus; it’s also about the new life he has given to you. To everyone! All of us who were baptized into his death are also baptized into his glorious resurrection!

“Jesus, thank you for the great sign of your resurrection! Lord, I believe; help me believe and trust and love even more.”

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion by Catholic Men

1. In the first reading, we hear Peter witnessing to Christ's passion and resurrection, as well as describing his personal call "to preach to the people and testify". How would you describe your personal call by God to be a witness for Christ to others? Why do you believe it is so difficult for many of us to share their faith in Jesus with others? In what ways do you find it difficult?
2. Recall a time when you have shared with someone about Jesus? What was the result?
3. In the Responsorial Psalm, our response is "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad." What is it about your faith in Christ that causes you to "rejoice and be glad"?
4. In the second reading from Colossians, we hear this startling proclamation, "you were raised with Christ" (Colossians 3:1). What do you think these words mean? What about the following words, "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory" (3:3-4)? How can you allow the truth of these words to impact how you live out your day, especially when faced with temptations or difficult circumstances?
5. In the Gospel we read that the disciples saw the empty tomb and believed. What have you "seen" during the Lenten season and Holy Week that has helped to deepen your faith in Jesus? What additional steps can you take to ensure that the renewal in your life that has occurred during Lent and Holy Week can become permanent and not fade away after a few weeks?
6. The meditation encourages us to "honor" and "celebrate Easter and reminds us that Easter is "also about the new life he has given to you. To everyone! All of us who were baptized into his death are also baptized into his glorious resurrection!" Easter is the feast of feasts, the greatest joy and gladness of all Christians. It has been said that Christians should be an "alleluia people"! As you prepare to celebrate Easter and the grace-filled Easter season, what steps can you take to allow the resurrection of Jesus to give you a new boldness and courage to share with others the "new life" and joy you have received?
7. Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord for his resurrection and ask him for the grace to grow in faith and trust in him. Use the prayer at the end of the meditation as the starting point.

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, a director of partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men**, for which he is currently a Trustee (<http://www.nfcmusa.org/>). He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]