

**Sunday, April 16, 2017**

**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

**He is Risen!!**

*I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. (Psalm 118:17)*

Jesus, you are the risen Lord, and all creation sings your praise today!

I hear the very stones cry out, just as you said they would, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Even the stone that sealed your tomb is rolled away and proclaims a wondrous mystery. Instead of being an immovable testament to your death, it has become an indisputable witness to your resurrection.

Today, the burial cloths come alive to declare your victory. How tightly those garments of death bound Lazarus when you summoned him from the grave! They clung to him and would not release their grip until you spoke the word: “Untie him.” But death had no hold on you, Lord. You broke free in a great burst of light, and left the burial cloths tidily behind. There in the tomb with Peter and the beloved disciple, your Church fixes its gaze on those discarded trappings with wonder and amazement. These cloths invite me to believe that my Redeemer lives. They urge me to stake everything on your mercy and your promise of eternal life.

Loving Savior, because of you, a cruel instrument of death now speaks to me of life. By your cross, you have destroyed the enemy and flung open the gates of salvation. Its light shines out—in our churches, in our homes, in hospital rooms, in the rubble of warfare, and in every dark and dreary place—proclaiming life to anyone who puts their faith in you.

So many transformed lives! So many signs of victory! Each one, in its own way, speaks to me of you. Help me to look, listen, and believe so that, in my own way, I too may become a sign that speaks of you to the world.

*“Jesus, you have conquered death! You live and are always at my side! Help this reality sink into the core of my being. Show me one new step, however small, that I can take today to ‘declare the works of the Lord’ by my life and words (Psalm 118:17).”*

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***Questions for Reflection or Discussion:***

1. In the first reading from Acts, Peter says that, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil.” It ends with these words: “To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”
  - Why do you think it was necessary that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power”?
  - Do you believe that through faith and Baptism and Confirmation, you also have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and power? Why or why not?
  - If you do believe this, then in what way do you also believe that you are called to go “about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil”?
  - What steps can you take to overcome any obstacles that keep you from telling others, as Peter did, that “everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43).
2. The responsorial psalm also speaks of the power of the Lord: “The right hand of the Lord has struck with power; the right hand of the Lord is exalted” (Psalm 118:16). The psalm goes on to say, “I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord” (118:17).
  - How would you describe what the “works of the Lord” are?
  - In what ways has the Lord given you the power to declare these works of the Lord to others? What impact did it have on the other person when you have done this?
3. In the second reading from Colossians, we hear these startling proclamations, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”
  - What do you think is the meaning of these opening words of the reading: “you were raised with Christ”?
  - What about the meaning of 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”?
  - How can you allow the truth of the words of this reading to impact how you live out your day, especially when faced with temptations or difficult circumstances?
4. The Gospel reading describes the resurrection of Jesus. It also describes how John the apostle “saw and believed,” when he saw the burial clothes -- even though he “did not yet understand the Scriptures that he had to rise from the dead”.
  - Why do you think John “believed” without any real understanding of the resurrection of Christ?
  - How would you describe your own belief in the resurrection of Christ? In what way have you experienced the new life that Jesus came to give you through his death and resurrection?
5. The meditation, in speaking of the “many signs of victory” that we celebrate at Easter, ends with these words: “Each one, in its own way, speaks to me of you. Help me to look, listen, and believe so that, in my own way, I too may become a sign that speaks of you to the world.”
  - How would you describe the “many signs of victory”?
  - What steps can you take during this grace-filled Easter Season so that your life can “become a sign” that speaks of the Lord to the world and honors him for what he has done”?
6. Take some time now and pray for a greater revelation and understanding of what it means that “Jesus is Risen – and how to respond to this in your life and words. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

***“Jesus, you have conquered death! You live and are always at my side! Help this reality sink into the core of my being. Show me one new step, however small, that I can take today to ‘declare the works of the Lord’ by my life and words (Psalm 118:17).”***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://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** (<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>) and a member of the board of directors of the **Christlife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization**

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