


EASTER 2017

The Lord is Risen!
You reply:
Indeed!
The Lord is Risen!



**It is Easter!
Everything is
changed. The Lord
lives among us.**

BEGIN EASTER WITH A FRESH HEART

During this entire Easter season try to imagine yourself as a new convert who has had no experience of Easter. As a new convert your mind and expectations have not been corrupted by a cultural Easter.

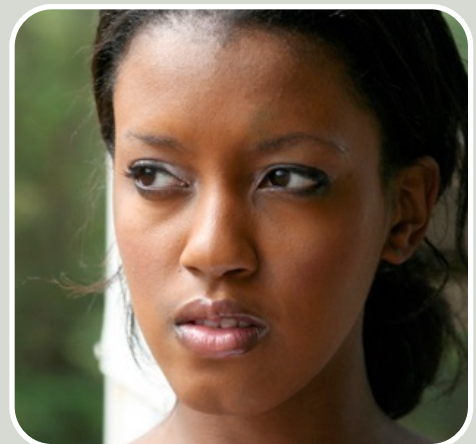
What would happen if you are a brand new Christian? You never grew up in a Christian family or had any training through the school system. This idea of celebrating Easter is a brand new experience. What will happen? What will you smell and who will you meet?

We all have had many experiences in life where we moved into the unknown. We had to trust that the people we are about to meet will be good to us. We have to be assured that no harm will come to us.

Try to shake lose all the memories from the past that you might have had. Perhaps

your family always gathered together for a wonderful meal at Easter. There was wine and sharing, laughter and home made pie for desert. Easter time was always a positive experience for your family.

But was it centered on the great event of our salvation? Did it spring from our belief that Jesus Christ was alive and risen among us? Was the experience of Jesus a slice of your Easter celebrations? When you sat down at the table was there any hint that this was about Jesus, alive and risen among us?



Here is a question:
Would a devout Moslem or Buddhist believer be able to identify from your home celebration that this was about the Risen Christ?

RESURRECTION IS



Have you ever prayed that the resurrection should happen in you?

We must never consider the Resurrection of Jesus to be a historical event way back there. There was an actual historical moment when Jesus rose from the dead. But now the resurrection must happen in the life of each believer. It is present, it is now!

THE RESURRECTION TOOK EVERYONE OFF GUARD

We have just completed the three days of Easter. We have told and relived the story of the Last Supper, the suffering and death of Jesus and the resurrection. We must use our memory and imagination to place ourselves in the actual context. Jesus, whom the disciples knew was innocent, came to a crashing end at the hand of his enemies. This at first appeared to be the triumph of evil. The good one had been destroyed.

The disciples were crushed. All the hopes that they had that this was the great thrust of God to deliver his people had now been destroyed. Their spirits were flatten. There was nowhere else to go but to return home and survive. They had to get back to work as they were fishermen.

Feel how much a disappointment this must have been. All his followers had deserted him. The only one who stood by were the women (secondary people). Peter had denied even knowing Jesus when challenged by the servant girl.

We had put all this effort forward and now this? Surely they felt the betrayal of their own history.

As a new believer you begin to see that no one can understand Easter unless they have first journeyed with the sufferings and rejection of Jesus. Our hearts and our emotion must be torn apart to begin to understand what the resurrection actually means.

Hopefully when you prayed through the liturgy of Holy Thursday and Good Friday your spirit and emotions were grasped by the desolation of this horrible time.



LOOK AT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED....

Before we move any further we must know that the resurrection of Jesus was a complete surprise. No one ever expected it. No one could even imagine that God was breaking through in a completely new way.

No one planned this event! No one can control the consequences of this event. The resurrection is always the sharing and revealing of God in a new way.

You must stand with these first witnesses. Look at the expressions on the faces of these women. Look at their shock.

First, the witnesses to the empty tomb and the ones who received the message of the angels were women. (Mt. 28, 1-10) The angels (messengers) clearly point out: "He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would."

Now we know this is true to form. God comes to the little ones, the ones without power, of this world. This is not the rich and the powerful claiming center stage.

God reaches out to the poor, the ordinary and the common woman and man. Everyone is wanted. Everyone is valued.

These first witnesses (women) validates the value of each human being. God is for everyone. This runs against the grain of almost all the cultures of this world. Where the world distinguishes between who is well educated and who is a labourer, God makes no distinction.

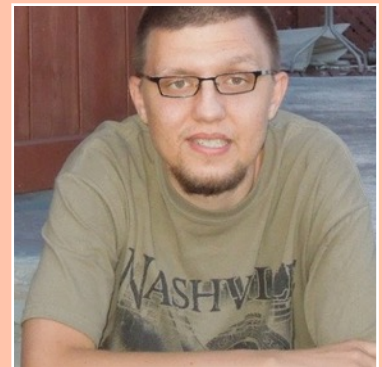
As a new believer, stand with all the ordinary people of this world. These are the people whom the media do not consider as worthwhile to interview. There is nothing in these people for the evening TV news.

Now, Jesus is risen for all humanity. Unpack the implications of the resurrection and you will have your heart expanded. No one can stand with these women at the empty tomb and not feel the push to value and love all the people for whom Jesus sacrificed his life.



See what the women see. What do they hear?

RESURRECTION IS.....



On this Easter Sunday...

burst forth with the new life of forgiveness and healing. May we seek to break the violence and self-centeredness of so much of our lives. May your divine mercy overflow our lives.

EASTER IN US

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Jn. 20, 21

The mystery of the resurrection claims us. We were never meant to be passive considering how wonderful God has been.

The resurrection of Jesus happened on a particular night. God the Father did raise Jesus from the dead. This is a historical fact.

But it must never stop there. The resurrection is beyond space and time. The other part of the resurrection must be that Christ is resurrected in us. The resurrection of Jesus must happen in the life-space of each believer. Jesus must be risen in us.

This is why we have taken the poetic insight of the English poet, John Manly Hopkins, and used it for our prayer. He took the noun, Easter, and made it into a commanding verb. Christ must now be Easter-ed in us.

Lord, Easter in us that we may be the living signs of your life and mercy. Whenever we reach out to another human being in kindness and respect, there is a touch of

God’s love. Whenever we seek to be patient with a co-worker who is struggling with addictions to alcohol and illegal drugs. They are trying so hard to move into a clean life but there is the occasional slip back to the booze. We are not condemning them for their weakness but rather giving them support and direction in their struggle for sobriety.

Living the resurrection is very concrete. It means living the love and mercy of Jesus Christ in our world. It takes shape in our homes, when we go shopping for groceries and when we are available to help the neighbors. The love that the risen Jesus has given us must now overflow into the lives of others.

Easter in us when we work to overcome our shortcomings. Maybe we are too hard working and organized that we can be harsh and overbearing on others who have a hard time getting



Apply the resurrection to your daily life

things straight in the morning.

We want to question ourselves about how understanding we are toward those who have limitations in their lives. How understanding are we towards them?

When we sing our songs of joy and happiness that the Lord is alive and working among us, we want to include the choice that Jesus has made of us. We are to be the living signs of God’s life --- today.

Pray at the empty tomb

The angel directed the women who came to the tomb that ‘he is not here.’ There is no need to be afraid.

No one expected this to happen. It caught everyone off guard and changed their lives forever.

Holy Spirit,

Alert my flagging spirit to joy, lift my eyes to see the horizon of your resurrection. Easter in our hearts the power of loving the forgotten in our nursing homes, brain damaged young men (from motor cycle accidents)

and those who struggle with depression.

Energize my spirit to love like you love, to walk compassionately as you walk compassionately and to see what you see in this world.