

Connecting with the Sunday Readings

Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of the Lord **Gospel Word**
John 20:1–9

Easter is the central feast of the Church. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, he would have passed into history as a great teacher, one who works wonders, and nothing more. The Christian faith would not have been created, and you would not be reading these words right now. Easter affected everything! Death no longer was final, and new life was made possible—life with God forever!

The first to arrive at Jesus' empty tomb on Easter morning were among those whom Jesus loved the most: Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John the Apostle. They were greeted with a great surprise. Jesus was not there! Eventually, they would learn that he lived—as the Risen Christ. He would appear to them and others to confirm their faith and trust in him, and to confirm God's plan for humankind. He would invite them to spread the word, the Good News about God's great victory over sin and death.

The various accounts of Jesus after the Resurrection are brief but filled with meaning. To show that something **new** had occurred, the tomb is empty. That alerts them (and us) to wonder what has happened. Jesus' after-Resurrection appearances show that God's love is stronger than death and that not only does Jesus rise from the dead, but we **all** will. What we receive on that first Easter and every one of its anniversaries is a reminder that God is more **powerful** than all human powers and that God's presence, power, and love are **ever present** in our hearts.

—by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

Living the Word

So beyond the eggs, the bunnies, and the baskets, take some time to think about the fact that Jesus is alive today and remains with us throughout our lives and even after we die. Jesus is not just our companion, but also the one whose life, death, and Resurrection has cemented our relationship to the God of Love. He gives our life possibilities that are more than we could ever dream. As the stone was removed from Jesus' burial place, God's grace poured out of that opening then, and continues to flow to us now.

Life is a precious gift from God. God's love for each of us flows into our personal lives. God lived among us in the person of Jesus to free us from all that might distract us from the miracle—the life that we enjoy each day. As you reflect on the meaning of Easter, think of your own life, it's beginning, and all the middle parts (like today), and then take a great leap into your future. What do you see? What comes to your mind? Ultimately you should see eternal life with God. And that should give you reason to shout "Alleluia,"—that wonderful word which means "Praise God!" Don't forget to thank God for the gift of **your** life. Take care of it. Be good to yourself. Stay healthy, interesting, and be of service. Let God's love flow through you to others. Easter is a special day on which we consider God's boundless generosity. We can show our gratitude for this generous gift by valuing ourselves and others, especially those in need of our assistance. Receive and give. That's the heart of the Easter message. Receive life and pass it on to others. Then we will all be able to live more fully.

One-line Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Resurrection, we thank you for the gift of life that has come to us through Christ Jesus, now risen and with us forever.
Amen.

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So beyond the eggs, the bunnies, and the baskets, take some time to think about the fact that Jesus is alive today and remains with us throughout our lives and even after we die. Jesus is not just our companion, but also the one whose life, death, and Resurrection have cemented our relationship to the God of Love. He gives our life more possibilities than we could ever dream of. As the stone was removed from Jesus' burial place, God's grace poured out of that opening then, and continues to flow to us now. This is the great day of celebration for all!

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 20:1–9

So, who were the first to arrive at Jesus' empty tomb on Easter morning? If you read the Gospel carefully, you can easily conclude that the first to arrive were among those whom Jesus loved the most: Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John the Apostle. They were greeted with a great surprise. Jesus was not there! Eventually, they would learn that he lived—as the Risen Christ. He would appear to them and others to confirm their faith and trust in him, and to confirm God's plan for humankind. He would invite them to spread the word, the Good News about God's great victory over sin and death.

The various accounts of Jesus after the Resurrection are brief but filled with meaning. To show that something **new** had occurred, the tomb is empty. That alerts them (and us) to wonder what has happened. Jesus' after-Resurrection appearances show that God's love is stronger than death and that not only does Jesus rise from the dead, but we **all** will. What we receive on that first Easter and every one of its anniversaries is a reminder that God is more **powerful** than all human powers and that God's presence, power, and love are **ever present** in our homes.

Thought for the Week

Life is a precious gift from God. God's love for each of us flows into our personal lives. God lived among us in the person of Jesus to free us from all that might distract us from the miracle—the life that we enjoy each day. As we quietly reflect on the meaning of Easter, think of your own life, it's beginning, and all the middle parts (like today), and then take a great leap into your future. What do you see? What comes to your mind? You should see eternal life with God. And that should give you reason to shout "Alleluia,"—that wonderful word which means "Praise God!" And don't forget to thank God for the gift of **your** life.

—by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

Parent Survival

Gifts are given by God for us to enjoy. They are also given for us to take care of, to develop, and to increase. Consider the parable of the talents. This parable was about God's generosity. We are to care for and use what we have received, and not bury God's gifts.

One of God's greatest gifts is our own life. Take care of it. Be good to yourself. Stay healthy, be interesting, and be of good service. Let God's love flow through you to others. Easter is a special day on which we consider God's boundless generosity. We can show our gratitude for this generous gift by valuing ourselves and others, especially those in need of our assistance. Receive and give. That's the heart of the Easter message. Receive life and pass it on to others. Then we will all be able to live more fully.

Car or Meal Talk

Ask your children what they understand about Easter. The culture provides some rather misleading messages about this day. Like most big days, it's considered mostly as a day to sell more stuff. Be sure your children know about its original and lasting meaning.

One-Line Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Resurrection, we thank you for the gift of life that has come to us through Christ Jesus, now risen and with us forever. Amen.