



BIBLE STUDY RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD YEAR A

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Parishes

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When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. JOHN 20: 6-8. NABRE

Reading I: Acts 10:34; 37-43

A New Life, a New Beginning! The word "renaissance" is defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary as a period of new growth or activity. Since the beginning of Lent, we have focused on new spiritual growth through prayer, fasting and alms giving. The images of Holy Week project a newness or renaissance of our spiritual life and renewed faith in our risen Savior. The triumphant entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, His institution of the Eucharist, His suffering and death on the cross, all point to His resurrection and a new life free from sin. If we maximized our Lenten experience, and walked the streets of sorrow on Good Friday, we now experience a deeper faith and a new life in Jesus Christ. We have a new beginning.

The first reading from Acts shows how both



The Resurrection of Jesus gives us a new life – a second chance.

Peter and Cornelius had new beginnings that began with the resurrection of our Lord. Cornelius was a devout Roman who believed in Yahweh. Peter, the leader of the new Christian community, thought that one should be a Jew before becoming a Christian. He got a new beginning in a dream the same day that Cornelius sent for him (Acts 10:1-3). The new beginning started for both of them when Peter, the Jew, entered the house of the Gentile, Cornelius (10:26-27).

Peter preached the resurrection to Cornelius and confirmed that though Jesus was killed, God raised Him on the third day. Peter saw Him after the resurrection and ate with Him (vv. 39-47). The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard him and Gentiles were baptized into the life and death of Jesus Christ. This was a new beginning. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** How was your faith strengthened during this Lenten Season? What can you tell others that will strengthen their faith?

A NEW BEGINNING FROM AN EMPTY TOMB

Some critics argue that because Paul does not speak of an empty tomb, the idea of the resurrection of Jesus must have developed years after His earthly life and ministry was over. But Paul refers to the burial (1 Cor. 15:4), which argues both for a proper tomb and against the body being dumped into a pit or a common criminal's grave.

... It is well to remember that these variations were recognized by early Christians and were not discovered by recent critics. As early as the second century, Tatian wrote his Diatessaron, or harmony of the gospels, expecting that Christians would gladly accept his work as a substitute for the four gospels. But while Christians read Tatian, they refused to substitute his harmony for the witnesses of the four gospel writers. The faithfulness of these writers in transmitting to us the gospel texts is a testimony to Christian integrity. It is also a witness to their early understanding that the gospels were Holy Scripture, inspired by God. (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Reading II Colossians 3:1-4

A New Life, a New Beginning! Some would call this letter to the Colossians mysterious, since there is debate over the authorship and the false doctrine repudiated by the author. For our purposes, St. Paul is the accepted author who exhorts his readers to persevere in truth. He offers a new life in the face of false doctrines of men. Where is this new life? It lies in the truth of Jesus Christ. He admonished the Colossians to live in Christ.

First, since the community had been raised with Christ and freed by baptism from sin and death, they should assume responsibility for that freedom (v. 1). Second, the new Christians should not only seek the kingdom, but also think of the spiritual, that is, what is above, and not what is on earth. He reminded them that they have a new beginning and a new life. They have died to this world and now must live in Christ Jesus (v. 4). **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What do you expect to happen after you renew your baptism vows?

Gospel: John 20:1-9

A New Life, a New Beginning. The great gift of the Resurrection is a gift of hope - hope in Jesus Christ. It is the confidence that comes from enlivened, restored faith. The resurrection gives us new confidence in God and His triumph over death with love and goodness. It restores our faith that love conquers hate. In the resurrection we have a new beginning.

We cannot help but notice the recurring use of the word "new" when we speak of the resurrection. The New Testament is called "new" because it narrates the revelation of Jesus as Son of God that was only understood after His resurrection. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus gives us a new understanding of God, as He revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus the Christ. The New Testament consistently teaches hope in the resurrection of the believer, based upon the resurrection of Christ as the "firstborn from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:12-58; Col 1:18; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 1 Peter 1:3-5). The concept of the resurrection itself conveys the idea of newness. The resurrection is expressed in the New Testament through such imagery as a transformed body (Phil 3:21), a new dwelling (2 Cor. 5:2), and new clothing (2 Cor. 5:4; Rev. 6:11).

The beginning of the resurrection story on the first day of the week and early in the morning emphasizes the new beginning (Jn. 20:1). Based on Mary Magdalene's account, the body of Jesus was taken from the tomb and she did not know where it had been laid. Peter and John saw an empty tomb with burial linens lying on the floor (vv. 3-6). Perhaps the presence of the expensive burial linens left behind convinced them that the body was not stolen. Nonetheless, *they saw and believed*. Note the word "tomb" is mentioned seven times in this short passage. This emptiness of the tomb suggests that their previous understanding of events was no longer applicable. They needed a new beginning, a new revelation of what had happened to Jesus. This required faith in what they did not see. Previously, they relied on what they saw Jesus do: His miracles, His teaching, His love and kindness, His suffering, and His death. They confirmed with their new eyes of faith that He has risen. Now, they could teach as witnesses what Jesus taught them about God's saving plan (Acts 10: 36-37). We also are witnesses seeing with new eyes of faith, as we gather on the first day of the week to celebrate the empty tomb. We have new life and a new beginning in Christ through baptism. DISCUSSION QUESTION: What will you do with your new beginning?

Pray About It

Monday

Privately renew your baptism vows.

Tuesday

Read **Acts 10:1-3**. Describe Cornelius' response to the vision. What is yours?

Wednesday

Read **Luke 20:17**. How do you relate this verse to the Resurrection?

Thursday

Read **1 Cor. 15:12-28**. What does mean to be the first born of the dead?

Friday

Read **Colossians 3:1-4**. Are you seeking the things of heaven?

BURIAL CUSTOMS

The Hebrews did not follow the Greek custom of cremation, except in an emergency, such as in the case of Saul and his sons, who were slain by the Philistines (1 Sam 31:12). After the valiant men had burned the bodies of Saul and his sons, however, they buried their bones (1 Sam 31:13). Neither did the Israelites generally use coffins or embalm their dead. The only biblical mention of a coffin is in Gen 50:26, where it may refer to a sarcophagus made of limestone. After it was wrapped, the body was placed on a BIER and taken to the burial place. Depending upon economic and social status, burial was either in a shallow grave covered with stones or in a cave or tomb hewn out of stone. Tombs were made secure by rolling a circular stone over the entrance and sealing the tomb (Mark 16:3-4). This was done to secure the body from animals. (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Resources: John Neal M. Flanagan, O.S.M. ; John Collegetville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegetville Minn., p. 1014-1015; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2017, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegetville, Mn. pp. 107-109 Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Sunday Readings Cycle A , Kevin O' Sullivan, O.F.M Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 135-141; Colossians, Ivan Havener, O.S.B., Collegetville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegetville Minn., p. 145-152

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2014