

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord | For Sunday, April 4, 2021

It's a Game Changer

Written by Fr. Mark Suslenko

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Colossians 3:1-4

OR 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9



Alleluia! Christ is risen! About today's feast [St. Augustine](#) writes, "And he departed from our sight that we might return to our hearts and find him there. For he left us, and behold, he is here." Take a few moments to ponder this thought as it is profound. Contemplating this truth allows us to see that it is a game changer. The power of the resurrection is not something to be experienced at that distant time when we either close our eyes in death or when Christ comes again, it is now!

When Jesus was transfigured before his disciples' eyes, he stood before them. Now that he has risen from the dead his resurrected presence is within them! This is not something that comes as the result of a request, it is simply a gift. When Jesus was born in time, God blessed humanity with His divine presence, showing us that we have within us His loving presence. A human being can provide a worthy home for God. This incarnational mystery allows us to see God in our brothers and sisters and indeed in all of creation. God is one with God's people. God journeys with us, transforming us into the true vessels we are meant to be.

Now, the resurrection of Christ brings us further and transforms us even more. Christ's glorified presence standing before us and living within us shows us that we are all much more than we see ourselves to be and show to others. We have a depth, purpose, and essence that go way beyond the superficial treasures of our existence to the very core of who we are. Slowly but surely, we are being given opportunities by God to be transformed more and more into Christ. This whole process will find final completion when Christ comes again in time and gathers all things and all people to himself. Then the fullness of truth will be realized.

As Jesus walked the face of the earth, he was known by many names and described in various ways. In and through all his earthly accomplishments and teachings, something special stood out, an "authority" that was not elsewhere. Jesus' divinity shined forth! While many could not necessarily comprehend it, they

knew it and could point to it. It is the divinity of Christ that can bring humanity the corrective it needs and provide it with a proper axis. Today, we celebrate the resurrected Christ once again and that same presence points us to what we need in order to live in the kingdom of God.

Christ is here. Christ is within us. We have the power. Christ is not sitting up in the heavens somewhere as a Trinitarian observer! Christ lives within us. That means that because of the resurrection of Christ, we have that same divine spark that gave Jesus his authority when he was physically with us. Through faith, we can see, think, act, and be differently. Doing so comes with a choice. Just because God's resurrected presence is within us does not mean that things automatically happen. We must choose to act on the power within. We have to decide, by faith, to take the plunge and put flesh on what we proclaim to be true today.

Who are you? Just as with the earthly Jesus, who we can describe in myriad ways. We can articulate our accomplishments, provide someone with a personality profile, discuss our likes and dislikes, and many other things. But ultimately who are you? Does the person who is being transformed into the image of the resurrected presence of Christ factor into your description? When God fashioned us in our mothers' wombs, there was a holy and sacred meeting. It was sealed with a divine kiss. At that meeting, God instilled His very presence within us and gave us a name known to none other. It is not our earthly name, but our divine one. This name claims us as one who is special and chosen in God's eyes. Can't you see how really accepting and embracing this truth can change the whole business of our lives? Nothing is the same and all has greater depth and meaning.

This self, known only to God, is the self that will one day leave every single attachment to this world and rise with the eternal Christ of God. This is the self that when it is able to shed all earthly attachments and false notions will discover and know freedom in a way never possible before. This is perfect love lifting us up and transforming us into who we really are, not who we want or need ourselves to be. It is no wonder then that any credible spiritual master and mystic throughout the ages sees union with God as the summit and goal of human life. Knowing this about ourselves makes the blessing of the Easter candle at the Vigil of Easter pop with so much meaning! "Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, all time belongs to him and all the ages. To him be glory and power through every age and forever. Amen."

So then, who are you? It is hoped that our celebration of Christ's resurrection provides us with new and fresh ways to think about Christ and God's love of His people. It is hoped that it also provides each one of us with fresh and new ways to think about ourselves and who we really are. Grasping our truth makes us realize how even more important it is to preserve and restore our relationships with all of God's children. The one who lives in us also lives in them. As St. Augustine reminds us, Jesus may have left us, but look he is here! That's a real cause for joy. It is even more a cause for working tirelessly at promoting the Gospel, working to rid the world of injustice, making sure that everyone has a home and defending, at all costs, the dignity and sanctity of human life. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Fr. Mark Suslenko

PRAYER

Lord of Easter's Promise,
I live in faith of the resurrection,
but such is the nature of my faith
that so much of me remains entombed.
Break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my compassion,
break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my sense of mercy,
break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my humility,
break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my love
for my heavenly Father,
break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my sense of joy,
break open the tomb.
Where I've buried my willingness to forgive,
break open the tomb.
Lord, in you I've found
a Savior no grave can withstand.
Help me to roll away this stone
and find the miracle of new life
that I may live more fully in your saving grace. Amen.

(from [Catholic Relief Services](#))