

The Resurrection

Biblical text: Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24, John 20

Fr. Lorenzo's commentary: It is fitting, I think, to end a series on "The Great Stories" of the Bible with the Resurrection. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the greatest story, not just of the Bible, but of human history. It is the foundation of our Christian faith. Without it, redemption is unaccomplished, we Gentiles are not part of God's People, and the sacraments are hollow. With it, the whole universe has changed.

What speaks most to me about this Event is the fact that the most attractive, gracious, righteous, loving person who ever lived is still alive. He is alive, and he seeks communion with us. When I pray to Christ, I am praying to someone who is alive and someone who is listening (though the specifics of the glorified Christ's omniscience eludes me). If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, he couldn't have a relationship with anyone, and my prayers to him would be sent up to the ether. The Resurrection is proof, not only of God's love for His Son, but of God's determination to not let the greatest person who ever lived slip off the world stage, as all men, however great, must eventually do. Jesus is alive, and the world will always have the transformative power of his Resurrection available to heal, restore, and strengthen us. The power of Jesus' Resurrection is more powerful than any problem, any fear, any shortcoming I face. It is a power that conquers the world... and saves it.



Commentary from Bishop Angaelos (perspective: Coptic Orthodoxy): Christianity carries within itself a strange paradox. Our Lord insists that we are free, victorious, and called to a greater life, but at the same time, over the past centuries we have seen so much persecution and affliction... We look around the world today and see so much conflict and unrest, and as we also look at our Christian brethren around the world we still see, even 2000 years after Christ Himself walked this earth, that there are people who are still persecuted as He was and lose their lives as He did. He indeed is risen, but what of those still persecuted today?

I want us to place ourselves with those disciples who ran to the tomb on Sunday morning, stooped down and looked within, only to be faced with a strange vision of angels standing within the tomb. As the disciples looked in, the angel had a very clear question: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5-6).

As Christians we must stop looking for Christ among the dead and we must start looking for victory through death. As Christ is risen, and as He has given us hope in that very same Resurrection, so we too must always look beyond the cross and the tomb. When our Lord spoke to his disciples, He said to them they would be sad, weep and lament, but He also said that there would be a day in which He would return to them and restore their joy, and that joy no one would ever take away (John 16:22).

We are the disciples of the One who has not only overcome the world, but has overcome death itself. It is within the fullness of [our] suffering that we are both part of and celebrate the fullness and the victory of the Resurrection. Today let us rejoice in our suffering, knowing that this will only lead us to rejoicing in the very real resurrection, one after which there will be no more suffering, pain and persecution, but only the beauty that comes from the presence of our Lord in His glorious kingdom.

Discussion Questions:

- What area of your life most needs to be touched by the transformative power of the Resurrection? Commit that part of your life to God in prayer this week.
- Do you ever rejoice in your suffering in the way that Bishop Angaelos describes? Why or why not? What might it look like for you to adopt this attitude?
- How does your hope in the Resurrection affect the way you live your day-to-day life?