

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of the Lord

We just cannot say enough about Easter. The meaning attached to this day is inexhaustible. It is the major feast of the year. Without Easter, we would not be Christians. The death of Jesus would be the final act of the life of Jesus. Of course, it wasn't, and here we are today, two thousand years later, recalling that moment when God raised Jesus from the dead. Yes, *this* day is the day the Lord God has made. Let us rejoice; let us be profoundly grateful to God who has not only given new life to Jesus, but to us as well.

Let us also look beyond the trappings of the day, the Easter baskets given to children, the new clothes we might wear to Mass this day, and the festive meal that may have been prepared for this day. All those are great, but they are not why Easter is such a special day. To find the deep meaning of this day, let us behold the mystery of Easter, which is no less than death (the death of Jesus and our own) being overcome by life—given by God. All of us will eventually die. But our real selves, the deepest part of us, will remain alive to God. With God's love supporting our continued life, our hope is that we will be with God forever, alive and totally happy in God's presence.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 20:1–9

The phone rings and the automatic answering machine responds: "No one is home right now. Leave a message." That's what today's Gospel reading is like: "He's not there. He's not in the place where they placed his dead body. The tomb is empty. He is not there." Something has happened.

Of course, as Christians we know what happened. He has been raised from the dead. He lives. The forces of evil could not destroy him. God's word is the last word and that word is *live!* God creates life; God sustains life; God forgives errant life. Once we're given the gift of life, God will not take it from us. Even creation fallen into sin is redeemed by God. For us and for our salvation Jesus gave his all on the cross as an expression of how much God loves each of us. Easter is not a feast celebrating the return of the sun, or the leaves, or the flowers. It is a feast that communicates to us that God's love for us will not end. Our God is a God of life. Jesus has risen. And with Jesus, as the Baptism ritual states, we rise with him. And we, including our family, will always be with him. Today celebrate God's gift of life in your family, where life begins and unfolds in so many of its wonderful expressions.

Parent Survival

Parents are primary givers of life! They can aptly be described as “ministers of life.” Thus, Easter is also a feast day for parents. While the gift of divine life, in a real way made manifest in Christ through his Resurrection, parents feed the life of their children every day. The mystery of life is what it is: an awesome reality when you really think about it. We often take it for granted, fail to notice its wonder, and fail often to appreciate the simple miracle of life itself, especially human life.

But we are surrounded with it day after day. We can much too easily overlook its magnificence. This is a good day for parents to simply take a few quiet moments and become more attentive to all that they have contributed to the lives of others, especially their own children. We can think of children as consumers of our time and energy, spenders of our financial resources, or to use a well-worn idiom, a “pain in the neck.” But to see them through such negativity betrays what is most essential and important: they are children of God and we, as their parents, assist God each day in contributing to their lives. What is more important than to give one’s life for others? Nothing! And many parents do this day after day.

Car or Meal Talk

Talk about the origin of this day. Why is the Resurrection of Jesus important? Even a little insight into this day is significant.

One-Line Prayer

God the Son, thank you for the gift of your love. Help us to appreciate more and more each day your wondrous gift of life to each of us. Amen.