



Jesus Lives Again!

Easter Day, Resurrection of the Lord

Matthew 28:1-10 and John 20:1-18

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"

And she told them that he had said these things to her.

April 16, 2017

Thought for the Week

Scripture: Acts 10:34, 37-43 • Colossians 3:1-4 • John 20:1-9

I feel quite sure that if you were to ask the ordinary, everyday Community of Christ member or any other Christian to name the religious days or celebration that they look forward to observe every year, they probably would name two, the ones most of us suspect: Christmas, the birth of the Savior, and Easter, the commemoration of Christ's resurrection.

It's obvious why Christmas appeals to so many: there are so many human elements in it that we are accustomed to. Christmas is a family celebration; it gathers people who may not come together at any other time of the year. Gifts and meals are shared and the birth of the child Jesus is recalled and celebrated. In short, there is a sense of familiarity and peace associated with Christmas. No one needs to work very hard to understand and enjoy Christmas.

Easter is also celebrated with its own special solemnity: it speaks of new life, of rising up and beginning again; Easter means that spring has returned in many different ways.

Nonetheless, if we should try to ascertain the meaning of these two Christian holidays, Easter would prove to be much more difficult to understand and explain. The reason seems obvious: the central element of Christian faith we celebrate on that day is simply resurrection, Christ's resurrection, Christ's rising from the dead. Such an assertion sounds so simple on the surface but at the same time it is the deepest mystery in all of Christian doctrine.

A better question, however, is not to ask how it happened but rather to ask what does it mean to say that Christ rose; what are the implications for the believer?

Some years ago John Dominic Crossan, a biblical scholar, wrote a book on early Christian beginnings. In speaking of the resurrection he said this:

"Christ's was not the only resurrection to take place in human history; resurrection always happens." Crossan's point is that in the natural world, death is never the end. Life actually rises up out of death itself. All this becomes very clear when we consider the way we look at the process of our own lives: deep in our nature there is a determination not to give up hope. Those who are ill are determined to get well again; the person who loses a job can only imagine finding a new job. On the week I am writing this, a series of million woman demonstrations is taking place around our country, women demanding greater respect and equal opportunities. Their slogan was "We shall Rise Up Again."

On the same weekend thousands of men and women gathered in Washington, D.C. to protest against abortion rights. They have been doing this year after year since the Supreme Court decision allowing abortion. This is simply another way for people to assert that death is never an option; resurrection is always the only option.

What all this means, it seems to me, is that, whether we understand it or not, the mystery of Christ's resurrection is the model or the way that the Christian can learn and practice rising up each day; there is no other option. Christ is risen and so can we.

Happy Birthday – Maxine (4/18) & Pam (4/23)

One Solitary Life - Anonymous Author

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. Until He was thirty, He worked in a carpenter shop and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He wrote no books. He held no office. He never owned a home. He was never in a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness. The authorities condemned His teachings. His friends deserted Him. One betrayed Him to His enemies for a paltry sum. One denied Him. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed on a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He owned on earth: His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and placed in a borrowed grave. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, yet today He is the crowning glory of the human race, the adored leader of hundreds of millions of the earth's inhabitants. All the armies that ever marched and all the Navies that were ever assembled and all the parliaments that ever sat and all the rulers that ever reigned - combined - have not affected the life of man upon this earth so profoundly as that One Solitary Life.