

St. Mark Study Guide

The Resurrection



The presence of the Risen Lord and his saving work permeates the entire Liturgical Year: Advent, the Christmas Season, Lent, the Easter Season, and Ordinary Time.

HISTORICAL EVENT

The Resurrection is historical in that it actually took place at a specific time and place, and therefore there were witnesses to its impact. Mary Magdalene met the Risen Christ and embraced his feet. Thomas the Apostle saw Jesus and the wounds and said, “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28). Two disciples walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus and recognized him in the Breaking of the Bread (Lk 24:13-35). All the Apostles saw him (cf. Jn 20:19-23). St. Paul tells us he met the Risen Lord on the Road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:3-6). He also writes that five hundred people saw Jesus on a single occasion (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-8). None of the witnesses to Jesus’ Resurrection expected it. In fact, they were demoralized by the execution of Jesus. Even when they did see him, some had lingering doubts. “When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted” (Mt 28:17). In other words, they were not easily convinced, nor were they caught up in some kind of mystical self-delusion or hysteria. Some of them even died as martyrs rather than deny what they had witnessed. In this light, their testimony that the Resurrection was a historical event is more convincing (cf. CCC, nos. 643-644).

A TRANSCENDENT EVENT

The reality of Christ’s Resurrection is also something beyond the realm of history. No one saw the actual Resurrection. No evangelist describes it. No one can tell us how it physically happened. No one perceived how the earthly body of Christ passed over into a glorified form. Despite the fact that the risen Jesus could be seen, touched, heard, and dined with, the Resurrection remains a mystery of faith that transcends history. Its transcendent quality can also be inferred from the state of Christ’s risen body.

- He was not a ghost; Jesus invited them to touch him.
- He asked for a piece of fish to show them that he could eat.

- He spent time with them, often repeating teachings from the days before the Passion but now in the light of the Resurrection.
- Nor was it a body like that of Lazarus, which would die again. His risen body would never die. Christ's body was glorified; it is not confined by space or time. He could appear and disappear before the Apostles' eyes. Closed doors did not bar his entry. It is a real body, but glorified, not belonging to earth but to the Father's realm. It is a body transformed by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 15:42-44).
- The Holy Spirit "gave life to Jesus' dead humanity and called it to the glorious state of Lordship" (CCC, no. 648).



St. Paul leaves no doubt about the reality of the Resurrection

St. Paul makes this clear in his first Letter to the Corinthians: "But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty, too, is our preaching; empty, too, your faith" (1 Cor 15:12-14). We also learn that, by raising him from the dead, the Father has placed his seal upon the work accomplished by his only begotten Son through his Passion and death. We see now the fullness of Jesus' glory as Son of God and Savior.

Sunday

Every seven days, the Church celebrates the Easter mystery. This tradition goes back to the time of the Apostles. It takes its origin from the actual day of Christ's Resurrection.

- Sunday extends the celebration of Easter throughout the year. It is meant to be illumined by the glory of the Risen Christ.
- Sunday makes present the new creation brought about by Christ.
- Sunday also recalls the creation of the world. The Genesis account of creation, expressed in poetic style, is a hymn of awe and adoration of God in the presence of the immensity of creation.

For Discussion

1. Do you believe in the Resurrection?
2. How is Jesus revealed as priest, prophet and king at Easter?
3. How does baptism enable you to share in Jesus Christ, priest, prophet and king?
4. What difference does it make in your life choices?
5. What other views of death have you heard besides a bodily resurrection?

6. When does your experience of the Resurrection begin?
7. Do you think anti-Semitism is on the rise again? If so, why?