

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Easter Sunday • Year B • March 31, 2024

*Risen Lord,
you broke
the chains of death
with your Resurrection.
All creation
exults over our Salvation!
What good
would life have been
if Christ had not come
as our Redeemer?*



© 1994, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, art by Steve Erspamer, SM.

Sunday Word

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9 or Mark 16:1-7

Witnesses to the Resurrection

The Apostles are prepared for their roles as witnesses to the Risen Lord as they follow Jesus in his earthly ministry. They see him doing good, healing those bowed down. They see the presence of God in Christ.

Seek What Is Above

Christ's Resurrection is the firm foundation of our new life. So put aside malice and wickedness. The glory of the Risen Lord shines upon us. Sincerity and truth call to us.

Gazing into a Dense Mystery

The Messiah had to rise from the dead. But this has not yet been sorted out as Peter and the other disciple run to the empty tomb.

They behold the mystery before them. The body of the Lord is not where they laid it. The burial cloths and head covering are neatly set aside. The empty tomb becomes the prelude to their understanding, a pause in silent contemplation before the fullness of faith.

Church Teaching: The Resurrection of Christ

Very Real

Christ's Resurrection from the dead is one of the central tenets of the Christian faith. It is a glorious truth handed on by Tradition as fundamental, grounded in Scripture, and preached as an essential aspect of the Paschal Mystery.

The Resurrection is a real event, something transpiring in time and that is historically verifiable as testified by numerous witnesses. In itself the absence of Christ's body does not provide direct proof of the Resurrection. Yet its discovery by the disciples is the initial step in recognizing the fact of the Resurrection.

At the empty tomb, a new era dawned, the era of the Church. Everything flows from our faith in the Resurrection of Christ and the astounding Good News of *our* new life in the Risen Christ.

Grasping the Reality of the Resurrection

The empty tomb shows that the Resurrection was not something that happened outside the historical order. The disciples did not act as if they were seized by some mystical exaltation. Their faith grew, step by step. Even when the Risen Lord appeared to them, they thought they were seeing a ghost!

By physical touch and by sharing a meal, Jesus plainly shows himself to be real and substantial. The Risen Lord also reveals the wound marks from his Crucifixion. This authentic human body of the resurrected Jesus bears unique properties not limited by time and space, for Christ's humanity belongs now to his heavenly Father's realm.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

The Resurrection ratifies Jesus' whole life and teaching. Baptized into his Death, we rise as adopted children whose inheritance is our own resurrection.

Even now in this world, as a foretaste of what will come, we partake of the promise of new, risen life in the Eucharist, in the Breaking of Bread. The Church glories in this mystery: Christians, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace through the gift of the Risen Lord and grow together in holiness!

Key Terms

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The historical fact of Jesus being raised from the dead to a new glorified life on the third day after his Death (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 638).

CROSS

Instrument of execution upon which Jesus died, this term also functions as a shorthand for the entire redemptive Passion, suffering and Death of Christ. It is the symbol of the unique sacrifice by which Jesus saves us. A devotional cross upon which a figure of Christ is suspended or fixed is called a *crucifix* (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 618).

Voices of Faith

John tells us by anticipation that it was buried with much myrrh, which glues the linen to the body not less firmly than lead. . . . that when you hear that the napkin lay apart from the linens, you may not endure those who say that he was stolen. For a thief would not have been so foolish as to expend so much effort on a trifling detail.

— Saint John Chrysostom

[B]y Christ's will there is in this sacrament [of the Eucharist] a continual renewing of the mystery of the sacrifice of himself that Christ offered to the Father on the altar of the Cross, a sacrifice that the Father accepted, giving, in return for this total self-giving by his Son.

— Pope John Paul II

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

640 (significance of the empty tomb), 642 (a new era of faith), 645 (the risen humanity of Christ)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:

Chapter 8 ("The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ"), especially the sections entitled "Historical Event" and "A Transcendent Event," pages 94–96

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:

126 (central tenet of the faith), 127 (signs witnessing to the Resurrection), 129 (condition of Christ's risen body)