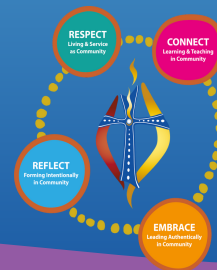


Family Prayer

The Resurrection for Transformation

by Maureen Gaul Leader – Formation Identity and Outreach Team



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, who opened their hearts and minds to the mystery and goodness of the Creator, and recognise their enduring connection to Country. We show respect to the Elders who shared memories and traditions through the stories of Elders, and broke bread to share table in community with one another. We invite you to join the journey towards transformative healing and renewed hope for the nation's First Peoples.

Context

The Easter Vigil

The celebration of Easter has always held a magical quality for me. Childhood memories of seeking out up-cycled containers stuffed with hay and coloured boiled eggs to squeals of surprise perpetuated into adulthood, and evolved, when as parent, elaborate egg hunts played out prior to customary Easter morning mass; a moment of exquisite delight that symbolically captures Christian joy and hope. Frivolity aside, I envision a time of mad scrambling from the disciples as they sought to understand their experience of the risen Christ, following the death of Jesus. Things are not always as they seem, and it takes some careful discernment to break through the superficial to discover new and deeper meanings.



Scripture

Luke 24:35-48

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Reflection

To me, this text speaks of impact of encounter with the risen Christ. Pope Francis recently addressed faithful audiences with his [Urbi et Orbi message](#), reminding believers of the miracle of Easter - that Christ is risen! However, I wonder if the disciples had this clarity of understanding, and what they felt at the time of encounter. Was it confusion in the seemingly inexplicable...mistrust and panic in something incomprehensible... or fear and terror of further betrayal and persecution...and...doubt?

Despite the time spent with Jesus during his ministry, surely there was much wrestling with uncertainty, ensuing questions, and feelings of uneasiness and discomfort before they reached a point of growing confidence in the new meaning revealed? Perhaps it was Jesus' invitation to be at table together that lessened their anxieties and allowed the reality of the risen Lord to become known through a shared eucharistic meal. Jesus shared a meal with those closest to him and challenged the disciples' disbelief by "making clear the full physical reality of his presence" (Byrne, 2015:210). In this story of table fellowship, Jesus encouraged his disciples to engage their senses in his transformation, inviting them to touch and see, and open their minds to believe in his resurrection.

The mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith, and like the first disciples, living out the 'divine plan' as credible messengers requires actioning Jesus' New Commandment, "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" ([John 13:34b](#)), or in the words of Pat Mirrin, "To see and touch the body of Christ that is the church, to feel and know the wounded hands and feet all around us and in ourselves as the focus of our love and service".

Of course, a Christian understanding of the magic of Easter extends beyond the scramble of the egg hunt. For believers, the wellspring of joy of and hope from the Resurrection Narrative is the impact of encounter with the risen Christ, that beckons deeper discovery – a personal transformation – by heeding the call to live out the tender and merciful love of Jesus in our everyday encounters with others as the living Body of Christ.

Prayer

Let us end in prayer, prefaced with words from His Holiness Pope Francis, "May the light of the resurrection illumine our minds and convert our hearts." I pray that the resurrection of Jesus continues to be a catalyst for renewal in the world to come, one that is transformed by the gift of God's grace and love. Alleluia!

Call to Action

- View Evangelisation Brisbane's [Stations of the Resurrection for kids](#) with your family;
- For family 'fullness of life' get involved with [1000 Hours Outside](#) site, [app](#) or [podcast](#);
- Commit to spending time with a community organisation, school or parish group;
- Contribute to a cause that you would support, like the Cairns Regional Council's ['Green Space Our Place'](#) program for example;
- Keep up with the latest social justice trends through [Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace](#);
- Take action with [Common Grace](#) – a movement of people pursuing Jesus and justice;

Inspiration for Reflection...

- Brendan Byrne's "The Hospitality of God"
- Mary Coloe's commentary [Changing the Goal Posts!](#)
- Mary McGlone's article [Third Sunday of Easter Through Confusion to Faith.](#)
- Pat Mirrin's article [Dispelling Doubts, Affirming Faith.](#)
- Pope Francis' [Urbi et Orbi Message Easter 2024](#)

Image

Greek Orthodox icon of Christ's resurrection, Thessalonica, Macedonia, Greece, Europe. Photography. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. quest.eb.com/images/151_2518778. Accessed 3 Apr 2024.