

Easter: The Resurrection

John 11:25-27



The Significance of the Resurrection

“Krisdos haryav ee merelotz!” (Christ is risen from the dead!)

“Orhnyal eh harootyoonun Krisdosee!”
(Blessed is the resurrection of Christ.!)

The emphasis of the teachings of Christ’s apostles was, “He is risen! Christ has conquered death.” The early Christians did not talk about the death on the cross but they constantly rejoiced in the resurrection. Even in our church today, the sign of our faith is not a crucifix but an empty cross.

The fact of the resurrection, alone, can explain the early Church and the new faith of the followers of Christ. The fact that millions believed the testimony of the apostles, in spite of all the hardships they encountered because of their faith, the spread of the Christian Church can only be explained by the reality of Christ’s resurrection.

This is the fact that gave life to the early Church and nourished it throughout the centuries.

“The resurrection,” writes Patriarch

Kaloustian, completed the work of our salvation. By his death Christ freed us from sin, and by his resurrection he restored to us the most precious gift of God — our new life of grace.

“Easter is *the* day of joy and happiness for all Christians, because it is the celebration of the greatest victory ever won on earth, the victory over the most unconquerable enemies of mankind, the powers of evil and death. Through his victory over evil and death, Christ gave us the hope and assurance that all his faithful followers will eventually share in this victory.”

Deeper Understanding

Christ in our lives doesn't exempt us from small or big problems. Jesus' presence in our lives doesn't bring about instant perfection or guarantee perfect harmony in all our relationships. But, in many cases, the problem or imperfection we encounter is an opportunity for our faith to stretch and grow.

We have no control over what life will send our way. This is an imperfect world and imperfection hits the innocent and guilty, the good and bad. But it is our decision, and we do have control over how we choose to respond to whatever comes our way. We can moan and groan and say, “Why me?” and get angry with God and cut ourselves off from inner faith, peace and understanding or we can face our suffering and turn to God to find spiritual as well as physical strength and wisdom which only comes from God.

President Franklin Roosevelt said during World War II, “There is nothing to fear but fear itself.” St. Paul put it this way: “Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Personally Speaking

What does Easter mean to you? Does it mean coming to know the power of God in a world filled with new life with beauty and variety in nature; the love of God for each of us and his forgiveness? Does Easter mean the gift of our lives, our faith, our salvation and the opportunity for our renewal and new hope? Does it mean victory over death?

St. Paul says in I Corinthians 15:54 and 55: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?”

Easter is the celebration of our triumph over anything which separates us from God, be it anger, jealousy, pride, or anything else.

Christ will come again and we can be ready. Hope and trust is the message of the empty cross and the empty tomb.

Easter Customs and Traditions

The custom of egg coloring is found all over the Christian world. The egg is a symbol of life.

The Easter rabbit or Easter bunny is entirely a western custom and is unknown in the East. The rabbit is a symbol of fertility and represents spring.

Easter is celebrated by visiting family and friends, especially those who are named Harry, because Easter is their name day (*harootyoon* — resurrection).

The Blessing of Homes is another custom of the Easter season. A portion of the *nush-khar* blessed during this ceremony is placed in the containers that hold the household flour, wheat and rice as a blessing. The blessed salt is mixed into the rest of the household salt and the blessed water is shared by all.

The most important practice of all is the

partaking of Holy Communion. Together with right faith and good works, Holy Communion is an important act in Christianity and it is our privilege and duty to approach the table on the occasion of Easter.

Conclusion

Our Lord lived and died and rose again that we may have peace, hope, abundant and eternal life together as brothers and

sisters.

The most important holy day of our Christian faith is Easter. The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that death is not an end but the beginning of a new life with God. Easter inspires us to believe in renewal as part of our everyday lives.

Without the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no Christianity. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

GROUP I

Matthew 28:1-20

1. Who went to the sepulchre? Why?
2. What happened there?
3. Who appeared? What did he look like? What did he say?
4. Whom did they meet then? What did they do? What did he say?
5. What did the guards do? What were they told to say?
6. Where did the eleven disciples go to see Jesus?
7. What did he tell them to do? Why?

GROUP II

Mark 16:1-8

1. Who went to the sepulchre? Why?
2. What did they see?
3. What did he say?
4. What did they do?

I Corinthians 15:1-8 (Summary by St. Paul)

1. To whom did Jesus appear?
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GROUP III

Luke 23:55; 24:1-53

1. Who went to the tomb? Why?
 2. What did they find?
 3. Who appeared? How did they react?
 4. What did he say? Whom did they tell? How did they respond?
 5. To whom did Jesus first appear?
 6. What was the mood of the two men?
 7. When did the two men recognize Jesus?
 8. What did Jesus tell them?
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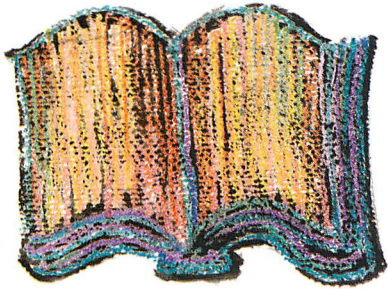
GROUP IV

John 20:1-31

1. Who went to the tomb? What did she find? What did she do?
2. What did she say? What did he do? (John is the other disciple.)
3. What happened next?
4. What did Mary Magdalene do? What happened then?
5. When did Jesus appear to the disciples? How?

At-Home-Work

I. *JOURNAL ENTRY. Read over "Doubting Thomas" and respond to the questions.*



II. *Share your lesson and Bible readings with your family.*

Monday

John 11:25-27

Tuesday

I Corinthians 15:54-55

Wednesday

Matthew 28:1-20

Thursday

Mark 16:1-8, I Corinthians 15:4-8

Friday

Luke 23:55 — 24:1-53

Saturday

John 20:1-24

III. *Read and study next week's lesson.*

Doubting Thomas

For some reason, Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them after his resurrection. When Thomas heard about what had happened, he said that he wouldn't believe that Christ was resurrected unless he saw the nail and spear wounds and placed his hand into them. (John 20:25)

A week later, Jesus appeared again at another gathering of the disciples and Thomas was present. Jesus invited Thomas to touch him. Jesus said, "Don't be faithless any longer, believe." In a mo-

ment Thomas was transformed from doubter to believer. (John 20:28)

Jesus said something else to Thomas. "Blessed are those who have not seen me and believe anyway." (John 20:29) In other words, faith is more than seeing. Faith is believing even without seeing. (Hebrews 11:1-6)

Questions and doubts do not destroy faith if we investigate the faith of our fathers; try to discover what evidence is available in Scripture, and turn to God in sincere prayer. This kind of doubt can lead to a stronger faith.

MY DOUBTS

A. There are many things that people doubt.

- What are some of the things that you doubt and are unsure of?
- How do these things make you feel?
- Can you think of some possible reasons why they worry or concern you so much?

B. Persons respond in different ways to doubts which worry them.

- How do you act when you are concerned deeply about something?
- What do you do? Go ahead and face it? Avoid it?
- If you have to try something that you are afraid to do, how do you feel while you're doing it?
- How do you feel afterwards?

C. There are things that bother some people and do not bother others at all.

- Why do you think some persons become worried about things that don't worry other people?
- Are there things that worry you that you don't know much about? What are they?
- How do you think you would feel about them if you understood them better?

D. Seriously looking at our doubts and worries can sometimes help us to understand them. (1) In the first column list five of your present doubts or worries. (2) Draw a circle

around the two doubts in column one which trouble you the most. (3) In column II in the first box write three reasons why the first doubt you circled in column I troubles you. (4) Do the same thing with the second doubt you circled in column I in the second

box. (5) In column III make a list of what you might do to help understand why you have the concern (read material about it, seek help from someone else, understand yourself better, pray, talk to another person about it, etc.)

Column I

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Column III

Column II

