

Easter Sunday

Resurrection of the Lord

April 21, 2019

Fr. Max Oliva, S.J.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ lies at the heart of our faith as Christians because it contains within it the promise of eternal life. As it says in our Opening Prayer: “On this day Jesus conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity.” The resurrection is the expression of God’s faithfulness to Jesus and to each of us. It reveals to us that LOVE is stronger than death. And this brings us both great Joy and firm Hope. Author and retreat presenter, Mary Poust writes:

“On Easter, we rejoice in Christ’s victory over the cross and joyfully embrace the unearned gift of Jesus’ resurrection and our salvation.”

Easter Sunday took on even more significance in our family because our mother died that morning, in 1960, at the age of 46 – after battling cancer for two years. She was a remarkable woman, a woman of deep faith and great courage. She trusted that God would take care of her family – my dad and the five of us children – and so she died in peace. She died before I realized I have a Vocation, but I have felt her presence often on my faith journey.

The resurrection was witnessed by many people:

The apostles and friends in the Upper Room

Mary Magdalene, in the garden

Peter and his brother, Andrew, James and John, at the north shore of the Lake of Galilee, where they used to make their living as fishermen

And the two disciples on their way home to their town of Emmaus

In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Ignatius makes a very good point about the appearances of Jesus. He says that even though it is not mentioned in the Bible, common sense would tell us that Jesus would have appeared first to his mother.

I shared this insight on a parish retreat in San Diego a few years ago. One of those who was making the retreat, a man who was a fisherman by trade and, as it turned out, quite a spiritual person, was so intrigued by this thought that he wrote a beautiful reflection. It is called:

“Easter’s First Embrace.”

Through the Holy Spirit came Love's Incarnate Light.
Cradled in her loving arms,
The blissful Babe slept in silent night.

Drawn to Jerusalem's journey, life's commitment made, At the foot of the
Cross, our Redemption paid. Only memories of Love's past, She holds but
tattered Remains. The Struggle with sin dims the Light, Shames the day into
the darkness of night.

"Look what they have done to my Son!" Immaculate Heart weeping, pierced
by evil's sword. O Virgin full of grace, Teach us the power of Love Endured.

Rejoice, Rejoice, the Son is Risen! "We have seen the Lord!" Our Father's
greatest promised Morning Has put an end to our Mother's mourning.

O dawn of Easter morning bliss! Jesus greets His Mother's kiss. Love to Love in
Easter's first embrace, Springs forth forever, Salvation's Grace.

O joyful Reconciled peace, Spirit of Christ, now guide us to the Eternal Feast.

Amen

--- Anonymous fisherman from San Diego, California