

On the Third Day He Rose Again from the Dead



“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”

—1 Cor 15:14

PICTURE YOURSELF IN FRONT OF a judge who proceeds to give you a choice: Burn some incense to an idol and return home or refuse and be the main course for the lions while providing some “dinner entertainment” for the local population. What would you choose? Many of our Christian forbearers were give this choice. They could have easily employed the sophism of, “as long as you don’t have the **direct intention** of worshiping the idol as a deity, then it’s permissible. The vast majority chose the second option. What would impel them to choose being thrown to the lions when a much easier option was available? Not only did they consent to being thrown to the lions but they went joyfully,

singing hymns. That witness over time would greatly impress the pagan Romans. What made Christians so willing to suffer a horrible death and do so joyfully? Belief that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead and lives. Because Christ has risen from the dead, they have already passed from death to life: the real life—eternal life.

The above brings us to the central mystery of our faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Everything rises or falls on this truth. As Catholic apologist, Dr. Peter Kreeft states, *“Every sermon preached by every Christian in the New Testament centers on the Resurrection. The gospel, or ‘good news,’ means essentially the news of Christ’s Resurrection. The message that flashed across the ancient*

world, set hearts on fire, changed lives and turned the world upside down was NOT 'love your neighbor.' Every morally sane person already knew that; it was not news. The news was that a man who claimed to be the Son of God and Savior of the world had risen from the dead."

Christians didn't allow themselves to be thrown to the lions, crucified, burned at the stake, and beheaded for love of neighbor. They did so because of the Resurrection. The Resurrection wasn't an abstract proposition but a living reality; a testament that they followed a living person. Because Christ rose from the dead and lives, life could no longer be the same for them. It set their hearts on fire and that evangelized the pagan Romans. The belief that Christ rose from the dead and would return again in glory turned these Christians into evangelizers who sought to bring the world to Christ. The Resurrection meant that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and Savior of the world and all must be brought to him. They didn't view Christianity as one "spirituality" among other equally valid spiritualities, but the TRUTH.

As stated above, everything hinges on this truth. It has been stated by many that the Church today is experiencing its greatest crisis ever. In the opinion of the Servants of God Archbishop Fulton Sheen and Fr. John Hardon S.J., it comes down to a loss in the belief of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Transubstantiation). That truth has been lost because of a disbelief in the divinity of Jesus Christ (the Incarnation). Belief in the Incarnation and belief in the Resurrection go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other.

Presently the heresy of Modernism engulfs the Church. At its foundation is a denial of the supernatural which has destroyed belief in the Resurrection. Everything has been reduced to "sentiment." Supposedly

your feelings can better get at the truth of something than your intellect. We see that especially in many of our "Catholic" public officials who reject all the major teachings of the Faith (especially the moral ones) and insist that they are still "good Catholics." Since they have their "feelings" in order, then the official teachings mean nothing. So then the Resurrection was not an actual *event* but a sentimental psychological *experience*. The disciples saw no phenomena of whatever origin; the revelation was of a different order of reality.



As the disciples remembered Christ's life among them, its true significance gradually unfolded as the revelation of a new mode of living, of relating to each other. They realized that He had led them to a breakthrough in their appreciation of what it meant to be fully human, and this revelatory experience released in them a new spirit of love and forgiveness. In this spirit, Jesus may be truly described as having transcended His death, to have remained "alive" (feelings) among His followers. All intellectual content is thus removed from the Resurrection proposition of the Creed. The "resurrection experience" is entirely subjective:

simply a sentimental feeling. An entire generation of clergy and religious were educated in the above during the 60s, 70s and into the 80s. Many of them currently hold leadership positions in the Church, hence the current crisis.

If the above is true then, as St. Paul says, "our faith is in vain." The truth is that the Resurrection sharply distinguishes Jesus from all other religious founders. No other religious figure claimed that he was God incarnate: Jesus of Nazareth made that claim. The bones of Abraham and Muhammed and Buddha and Confucius and Lao-tze and Zoroaster are still here on earth. Jesus' tomb is empty. The Resurrection validates the truth of the divinity of Christ.

We have eyewitness testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus. He appeared to Mary Magdalen, the *Apostola Apostolorum* (the Apostle to the Apostles), the first witness to the Risen Christ. He appeared to all the Apostles. He let St. Thomas put his finger into his side. The Risen Christ still bore the wounds of the crucifixion. He appeared to 500 disciples at once. Did all 500 have the same “sentimental *experience*” at the same time?

Remember that all the Apostles, with the exception of St. John, experienced violent deaths. All they had to do to escape was to say that they had made all this up. It didn't happen. Would you go to a violent death, like those later going to the lions, for something that you knew to be false? Again, the Resurrection is based on **eyewitness** testimony. This testimony is rejected by many “scholars” because it involves the supernatural. Recall the definition of Modernism is that there is no supernatural. You see this in the “scholar” Rudolph Bultmann, whose “scholarly expertise” formed many of the clergy and religious mentioned above, who said: “An historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable.” He also stated that

anyone who believed in the lightbulb can't possibly believe in the supernatural.

But the Resurrection occurred. What impelled the martyrs to sacrifice their lives? What impelled Saint Maximilian Kolbe to change places with a condemned man and go to death in a starvation bunker? Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, Who gives us eternal life. The Resurrection not only reminds us of who Jesus Christ really is (the Son of God) but, because of that, our lives must henceforth be radically different. The Church doesn't exist in order to tackle climate change, wealth distribution, or “comprehensive” immigration reform, but to bring people to Jesus Christ, true Savior of the world. The Resurrection means that He truly lives to give us the graces necessary to attain our salvation. May the Easter season remind us that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, conquered sin and death, and will return in glory. Because of this truth, it can never be “business as usual.” All has changed. May His Resurrection change us.

