

HOM Easter 2019

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ definitively answers the question, “*Is there life after death?*” Even today, some people might say that no one has ever come back from the dead after being buried to confirm that there is.

But we would certainly disagree. We believe that Jesus Christ rose to life after being publicly executed on a Cross with His lifeless body then buried in a tomb from Friday afternoon until early Sunday morning. We further believe that after His Resurrection from the dead, over a period of some 40 days, He appeared about a dozen times to a total of more than 500 followers including those known as His Apostles. He even ate with some of them and invited them to touch Him in order to convince them He was not a ghost. He also showed them His bodily wounds from His crucifixion.

We also believe that Jesus’ Resurrection was not a resuscitation to the kind of life He had on earth before His Death, but rather, a Resurrection into eternal life. It was a return to the eternal glory of the Most Holy Trinity that was His before He took Flesh, and now, He is one with the Father and Holy Spirit in glory in His divinized humanity.

When He appeared to His disciples His glory was veiled, but His body, now eternalized, was no longer subject to time and space so He could show up or disappear wherever He willed: on the road to Emmaus, or on the seashore, or in the locked upper room.

Those who personally saw the Risen Jesus were convinced of His Resurrection, even if they had been skeptical of the reports they heard before hand, like the Apostle Thomas. There is no Scriptural record of anyone seeing Jesus and not believing -- and remaining convinced -- that Jesus had truly risen from the dead.

And their testimony is compelling because their lives changed. Simon Peter and the others who were fishermen had gone back to fishing the very next day after Jesus was crucified, this despite three years of accompanying Him full-time during His public ministry. But upon encountering the Risen Lord, they gave up their livelihoods in order to devote themselves to doing what Jesus had earlier commanded them to do. Matthew the tax collector undoubtedly did the same.

They then went about proclaiming the Gospel message -- the good news concerning the Death and Resurrection of Jesus – a message about the meaning and purpose life and death for all of humankind. And they did this for no personal earthly gain. They did this even unto persecution and martyrdom in many cases, because they understood that to be united to Jesus in His obedience to the Father’s will unto Death and Resurrection to divine glory is the very goal of human existence.

So, not only does Jesus' Resurrection from the dead definitively demonstrate that there is life after death, it also gives us a glimpse into what that life is like. It makes clear that life beyond the grave is not life as usual.

Jesus showed three of His apostles – Peter, James and John—what life after death in oneness with Him will be like. Shortly before He went to Jerusalem where He would be crucified, Jesus took them up a mountain and showed Himself to them in radiant, divine glory – the glory that awaited them if they joined Him in doing the Father's will unto the Cross.

Paul, who was been temporarily blinded by that dazzling radiance of Jesus glorified, wrote after his conversion: *"I consider everything as rubbish compared to the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus, and I accept the loss of everything that I may gain Christ and be found in Him....sharing in His sufferings by being conformed to His Death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection of the from the dead."* (Philippians 3: 8-11).

With insight into what awaits those who gain eternal life with Christ, Paul also wrote that it is beyond *what human eye has ever seen or ear ever heard or heart ever imagined.* (! Cor. 2: 9)

In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John recounted a vision he was given of the new heavens and the new earth and therein the *"holy city" that gleamed with the splendor of God, its radiance like that of precious stone (2: 11), where there was no need of sun or moon because the glory of God gave it light (21: 23).* John also said that there is no more death or mourning, wailing or pain there.

In his encyclical, *In Hope We are Saved*, Benedict XVI wrote that:

To imagine ourselves outside the temporality that imprisons us and in some way to sense that eternity is not an unending succession of days in the calendar, but something more like the supreme moment of satisfaction, in which totality embraces us and we embrace totality.... It would be like plunging into the ocean of infinite love, a moment in which time—the before and after—no longer exists....a plunging ever anew into the vastness of being, in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy.

The Catechism states that those who attain Heaven are like God forever, that Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. It is *"to be with Christ"* and *"to live in Christ"* where one finds and retains one's true identity. (nos. 1024, 1025)

Finally, we must keep in mind Jesus' own words that those who are raised to life with Him *"neither marry nor are given in marriage"*. (Mk 12: 25). This, we may suppose, is because these are now the *"wife of the Lamb"* (Rev. 21: 9) in the eternal wedding of Heaven where all are perfectly one with Jesus, yet remain distinctly who they are – and are perfectly united to all those in Christ.

So, Brothers and Sisters, there is definitely life after death for those united to Jesus in His Death and Resurrection. It is life that is as far beyond our hopes as it is different from our earthly lives—a life that evokes endless praise and gratitude to God by those who attain it.

The way to this glorious, new life is, of course, Jesus, who said: *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.* (Jn 14: 6). He furthermore taught us that He is the vine and we are the branches, and that united to Him we will not only be raised to life with Him, but that we will bear much fruit so that others will be united to Him and be raised to life (Jn 15: 15: 1-5).

And He gave us the Sacrament of His Body and Blood and assured us that, *“Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in Him ....has eternal life, and I will raise Him on the Last Day”* (Jn 6: 56, 54).

But, brothers and sisters, I would certainly be remiss and uncharitable if I did not also share with you the words of St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians where he writes: *“Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolators nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the Kingdom of God.”* (6: 9-10)

Jesus himself has warned us that apart from Him we are like branches severed from the vine that wither and are thrown into the fire (Jn 15: 15: 16). He used the strongest terms in saying that this was a “place of torment” (Luke 16: 28) and “eternal punishment” (Matt 25: 46) where the “worm i.e., the maggot that feeds on decaying flesh, never dies” (Mk: 9: 48). He also revealed this unending state of separation from Him as “a pool of fire that is a ‘second death’” (Rev. 20:15). It is called Hell.

And He told us that we can separate ourselves from Him -- and end up there -- if we neglect the poor (Lk 16: 19-31; Matt 25: 31-46); if we commit sins against God’s commandments without repentance, including sins of the Flesh (Matt 5: 22, 27-30), or – if knowing the need to do so – we do not faithfully partake of his Body and Blood in Holy Communion, as regularly partake of bodily food and drink (Jn. 6: 53).

If we want to remain united to Jesus, Mary will make sure that we do, Indeed, if we are willing, she will see to it that we join in Jesus’ self-offering unto the Cross and Resurrection, so that all those we hold dear – and all willing get to heaven. Just pray these words silently and sincerely at Holy Communion: I AM ALL YOUR O MOST LOVING JESUS THROUGH MARY YOUR MOTHER.