



walking with purpose

Easter Sunday 2020

# DEFINING MOMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

Happy Easter, my friends!

“This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.” (Psalm 118:24)

Today is our day of victory and should be the happiest day of the year. And perhaps that is exactly where your emotions are right now—rejoicing and tasting the goodness of the Lord. I so hope you are. We all know that it’s not about the Easter Egg hunt, the basket from the bunny or the new spring outfit. So in theory, it shouldn’t be a big deal to let go of what we had thought this Easter would look like and embrace the one we have. But from my experience, it just isn’t that simple.

It could be that this Easter Sunday finds you feeling flat, disappointed and discouraged. It just doesn’t *feel* like Easter. As a result, your cry of ALLELUIA might sound a little weak. You might be missing family members. Today more than any day, it seems unbelievable that we can’t receive Jesus in the Eucharist. There are a lot of unmet longings in our hearts.

So how do we celebrate Easter, this holiest of days, when things feel wrong?

The way out of the funk today is the same method that can work for us any day of the year. We move out of the grave and into the Resurrection when we draw near to the throne of grace, asking the Lord to speak His truth into our minds and hearts. Jesus is the victor over sin, death, and the lies that rob us of joy.

Romans 12:2 tells us to “not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God.” What is the will of God for us today? It’s for us to unite our hearts and will to His, and for us to taste His victory in our own lives, regardless of how things feel.

We typically assess our level of joy by our satisfaction with our current circumstances, but our readings this Easter encourage us to seek joy in the truth. There are two second reading options for today, and I’m not sure which one your priest will choose. But both have an important message for us in terms of joy. In Colossians 3:1-4, we read, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”

And then in 1 Corinthians 5:8, we are challenged to celebrate this feast of Easter “not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” There are many passing joys in this world, and we are missing many of them right now. But they don’t hold a candle to true Easter joy which is founded on the truth that the Resurrection of Jesus has changed *everything*.

Our minds are renewed when we feed them truth. This requires paying attention to what we have been feeding our minds so far today. Do we actually need to read another article on our phones about COVID-19 right now? Is scrolling through our social media feeds going to lift our spirits or is it more likely to suck us into the trap of comparison, feelings of irritation or a dull stupor?

Today’s readings offer us something different to dwell on. Let’s invite the Holy Spirit to have His way with us. He can redeem what we are feeling. He can shift our perspective. He can help us raise our spirits. That’s the message of Easter. If death couldn’t hold Him and the grave couldn’t keep Him, then there is nothing about this day that is too much for Him.

**Things to Remember:**

Each one of us comes to this material from our own unique vantage point. You are welcome as you are. No previous experience is necessary. Some of you will find that the questions in this study cause you to think about concepts that are new to you. Others might find much is a review. God meets each one of us where we are, and He is always faithful, taking us to a deeper, better place spiritually, regardless of where we begin.

*Bible Sourcing:* There are many translations of the Bible; the Holy Spirit will speak to you in whichever translation you choose. The recommended Bible translations for Walking with Purpose are: The *New American Bible* (NAB), which is the translation used in the United States for the readings at Mass; *The Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition* (RSV); *The Jerusalem Bible* (TJB) and *The English Standard Version* (ESV).

*Catechism of the Catholic Church:* Some short clips are referenced throughout the lesson to complement the Scripture study. Referenced in each lesson as CCC# and noted at the end of each corresponding lesson. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a catechism promulgated for the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1992. It sums up, in book form, the beliefs of the Catholic faithful.

*Answer Key:* The answer key is located at the end of this lesson. You will benefit so much more from the Bible study if you work through the questions on your own, searching your heart, as this is your very personal journey of faith. The answer key is meant to enhance and provide personal guidance through Biblical context and author's insight where needed.





This is a description of restoration. It is the fulfillment of the promise of Joel 2:25, “I will repay you double what the swarming locust has eaten.” The Kingdom of God is one where relationships between us and God, between each one of us, and between man and the earth is healed. This is what God promises to His children.

But this is key: God does not promise the fullness of the fulfillment of these promises here on earth. Only those with an eternal focus, only those who recognize that heaven is where it all will come together, will be able to live a victorious life here on earth.

In the words of theologian Tim Keller,

And to the extent that future is real to you, it will change everything about how you live in the present. For example, why is it so hard to face suffering? Why is it so hard to face disability and disease? Why is it so hard to do the right thing if you know it’s going to cost you money, reputation, maybe even your life? Why is it so hard to face your own death or the death of loved ones? It’s so hard because we think this broken world is the only world we’re ever going to have. It’s easy to feel as if this money is the only wealth we’ll ever have, as if this body is the only body we’ll ever have. But if Jesus is risen, then your future is so much more beautiful, and so much more certain than that.<sup>1</sup>

*Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . One day, all the wrongs will be made right.*

*Dear Lord,*

*Help me to live out Colossians 3:2, because I want to set my mind on things that are above, not on earthly things. “Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7). The price for my sin has been paid. Because of Jesus, “everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43). And that’s not all. You have promised me that when Christ appears, then I too will appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:4). How mind-boggling it is—that this is what you have graciously offered me.*

*Because of this truth, I want my heart and will to be totally united to yours. The only thing that stands in the way of me being able to do that is my lack of trust. But how can I lack trust in the One who has given everything to me? I pray I would be willing to lose my life for your sake, because I know only then will I find it. Please give me both the desire and the ability to abandon myself utterly to you.*

<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *King’s Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 222.

*May this perspective of C.S. Lewis be mine...*

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, the death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and the death of your whole body in the end: Submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will really be yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.<sup>2</sup>

*This. This is my greatest desire. You, and only You.*

*Amen.*

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<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 175.), 222.

**Answer Key**

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1.
  - A. Mary ran to Simon Peter and John (Tradition tells us that the “other disciple” was the Apostle John). Mary was afraid that someone had taken Jesus from the tomb to an unknown location.
  - B. She got up at the first possible moment that she could to go to His grave. Jesus had healed her of seven demons. She was one of three who stayed with Jesus throughout His time on the cross.
  - C. Answers will vary.
2. They ran to the tomb, and John outran Peter. When they arrived, John waited outside, looking in and observing. But Peter went all the way in. They both saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered His head rolled up in a separate place.
3. John “saw and believed,” John 20:8.
4.
  - A. The death of Jesus and His resurrection means that we will be resurrected as well. We believe that Jesus will bring us to eternal life.
  - B. If there is not resurrection of the dead, Jesus wasn’t raised. And if Jesus wasn’t raised from the dead, our faith is useless. Our faith is futile, and we are still in our sins, and lost. “If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all,” (1 Corinthians 15:19).
5.
  - A. The “blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them.”
  - B. “The baby shall play by the viper’s den and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair”—without fear.
  - C. God will wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain.



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