

Easter Sunday  
April 12, 2020  
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## **He is Risen!**

He is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! I have even more good news—seriously! Think about it, because everyone is home, there is little chance that you will miss the Easter Bunny. When I was very little, one of my favorite holidays was Easter. I would like to say it was because Jesus rose from the dead, but I did not fully appreciate what that meant at about age five. I loved Easter because our family hid Easter baskets and had other fun and lovely traditions. One year, my mother had the bright idea to hide the baskets outside, as the weather was perfect. Remember, I am from Erie, where it snowed a couple days ago. Anyway, she woke up early, had everyone get dressed, and go outside in the yard to hunt for our baskets. My Mom however, had not factored in that we had two Labrador Retrievers, who also loved to “hunt” for things. All of our basket contents were strewn about the yard – some things I do not think we ever found. All except for my sister’s basket, as hers was at the top of the maple tree in the front yard. It was not until years later that I realized that my mother had to have climbed the tree to get it up there—that was a miracle!

Easter means something very different to me now. While I still love Easter Baskets, and keeping family traditions, from my family and from Sylvia’s, I know that Easter’s true meaning is about the greatest gift a person can ever receive—the very gift of life itself through Christ. All of us gathered here at Easter, are here because we have heard the story of Jesus and His overcoming death—impossible for us mortals. This is our story, a story of hope, a miracle story for all time.

What other stories give you hope? What miracles have you witnessed in your life? Some of you who are very young, may only have experienced a couple, or you may not even be sure you have seen the unimaginable, yet. Others of you, know you have seen the gloriously impossible and improbable.

Your experience of the miraculous depends on what you consider a miracle. Have you experienced the birth of a child; have you received a random act of kindness from a stranger; have you been able to forgive someone; have you ever been forgiven? Have you ever loved someone, or been loved yourself? In my book, these all count as miracles of varying magnitudes.

But the miracle of the resurrection is a miracle of the highest order. Where do you draw the line between yourself and the divine? Put your pencil down; Jesus came to erase the lines and break down the barriers. He welcomes all of us from every walk of life into God’s Kingdom, all humankind—everyone, no exceptions. That divine love, that has loved us into being since before we were born, that love continuously welcomes us into intimate communion, is worthy of joyous celebration.

But the Easter story is not only a story. It is an account of God reaching from infinity through the veil of this life and touching humankind. The Word was made flesh—think incarnation. Flesh that came through the pains of death, and changed our relationship with God forever. Jesus took in all the evil of the world, and God could have blown it back at us as a retribution. God in His compassion transformed it, and sent it back as new life as a source of renewal for the world He loves. He is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed.

And there is another miracle for us here. Some 2,000 years ago, with no social media or mass communication, Jesus managed to live and love people so deeply, in a ministry that spanned

only about three years of which we focus, and yet we still tell the story today. In 1454 after Gutenberg invented the printing press, he created the Bible as the first printed book. (Library of Congress) It was then, that what we might consider a modern marketing plan was started for Christianity. But the story of Jesus, had to make it 1400+ years to get to that point. It made it through the sheer power of the Spirit, working through people, and that in itself, is a miracle.

If you are like me, you could never have imagined giving up as much during Lent as we have had to give up this year! But to everything, there is a season and a time under heaven.

Right now, today, is the time for joy and rejoicing, feasts and the wonderful sound of Alleluia ringing through our heads and hearts. We still have to keep physical distance, we still have mourning to do and uncertainty to live into. But today, in this moment, we celebrate that we are part of God's family, that we have been freed. I am so grateful for the gift of my salvation, that I can rest knowing my life in God is eternal. All of us are invited to enter into the joy of this day, to feast, to dance, to celebrate, and to sing. Wherever you are, and whatever your circumstance, know that you are loved and rejoice!

This does not mean that we will not face trials. Hunger and injustice, poverty and greed, hatred and sin have not vanished. But neither have charity and justice, philanthropy and kindness, love and forgiveness. Feast on these, celebrate charity, love, justice, kindness, and forgiveness, for the joy and miracle of God is found there.

In every adversity there is opportunity. As Jesus says so many times in the Gospels, "Do not be afraid." Jesus' suffering and death is the opportunity for us to enter eternal life, alleluia! *In the words of St. John Chrysostom, "Christ is risen and life is freed, Christ is risen and the tomb is emptied of the dead: for Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power for ever and ever."\**

Sleepers awake, to the joy of a Happy Easter! Amen.

\*Easter Pascal Homily, St. John Chrysostom

<https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/easter-paschal-homily-john-chrysostom/>

Jeremiah 31:1-6, Acts 10:34-43, Matthew 28:1-10, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24