

## EASTER DAY 2025 All Souls' **RESURRECTION NOW!** dtw

There were no human witnesses to the actual raising of Christ from the dead; only appearances of the raised Christ to witnesses. How Christ was raised remains God's secret. *That* Christ was raised forms the fundamental basis to Christian faith. Paul writes in First Corinthians: *If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.* (15.17) But merely believing such a fantastic occurrence as if it were reported on the late news wouldn't really deliver the amazing conviction that overtook once fearful and confused disciples. Some great headline may no doubt leave a passing impression, but soon our attention would move to something else – it's been a bit like that lately with the multiple calamities that have happened in the first few months of 2025 – you can hardly keep up. Media sensationalism doesn't even have much impact on us; waves and waves of words and pictures, but who really gets wet? Our consciousness is formed and deformed by anchor-zombies interested only in events that can be recorded, filmed, circulated, but then forgotten. The question "Did the resurrection happen?" begs a media format answer. Imagine a first-century newsreader, Jerusalem, the Sunday night after Passover, Year 30. "Early this morning the crucified criminal Jesus of Nazareth was allegedly raised from the dead. His sepulchre was allegedly found empty except for a few cloths. His disciples are nowhere to be found. The authorities are looking into the matter. Now to other items making the news this hour: Five more zealots were crucified outside the city wall this afternoon. War to the Slavic north and Gaza shows no signs of abating; the Zion Ordinaries Index (ZOI) rose two points before the Passover break. Weather for the City of David: fine and 23 degrees." The 'news' hardly touches us. There is really nothing new about it. Our problem is that most of us may not know a world-changing event if we saw one. This is because we have lost the art of *really looking* at things: 'discerning' things. The news camera, all too often, is like the eye of the unblinking cane-toad. It records everything and understands nothing.

The Resurrection changed the world, and such an occurrence is resistant to cameras and recorders – it takes something quite different. The Christian experience is a pilgrimage of new life: an experience that prepares our inner vision so that we might see the healing power of the radically new through the eyes of faith. The resurrection, in fact and faith, is nothing less than the revelation of the re-ordering of all things. It turns everything upside down, including people – people like Mary Magdalene, John, Peter, Paul – they were never the same again. Sadly, two thousand years later, we live in a time when faith is thin because the human aching for what is above and beyond us has been anaesthetised and our capacity for awe and wonder often reduced to clever tricks.

Two things confront us in the records of the resurrection of Christ in Scripture and the way the early Christians understood it:

1. It really was Jesus who appeared to his disciples and others: it wasn't a phantom, a ghost, or a hallucination. Neither was it merely a resuscitated body. The nature of the raised Christ is changed but entirely convincing.
2. Curiously, in every different account it took time for them to recognise Jesus.

Why was this the case? Was it that they didn't dare trust their experience? Most of us live under the spell of what we *think* our experience in any given situation *ought* to be. Just ask Saul of Tarsus. This zealous Jew, who thought he had it all together, had a rude awakening on the road to Damascus as he was about to persecute more Christians. The real pain and joy of Resurrection is a profound inner revolution of self-understanding and the powerful word for this experience is 'conversion'. The persecutor, oppressor, Vladimir Putin professes to be Orthodox. Like Paul, he needs a critical

Damascus revolution of self-understanding and repentance. The blood of Ukraine martyrs cries out. There are other world leaders who seriously need a reality check.

The story of Christ's passion, death and resurrection cannot connect with those who are control freaks – who are self-sufficient. It is there for those, and only those, who are in some degree or other in touch with their own longing and aching – those who know what it means sometimes to be at the end of their rope – to be fragile and vulnerable human beings. And it is there for those who look below the surface of things, for this is what discernment entails amid a lot of very superficial living. The Resurrection means a stir-up for those who are comfortable with being only half alive. It is there for those prepared to be surprised by joy - those prepared to fall in love. Are you? Ultimately, it means our homecoming, for God has met us in his risen Son and brought us home. And this, dear Easter people, is a foretaste of Heaven.

And now, a poem by Sister Sandra Sears, adapted, with permission, entitled *Sacred Space* (Copyright 2006)

Celebrate the sacred space  
Of crypt and catacomb  
Cathedral, chapel, meeting hall,  
Where God has found a home.

Celebrate the sacred space  
Of studio and theatre,  
Where gift and Spirit-fire dance  
To Love's creative meter.

Celebrate the womb, for there  
The Sacred meets the sensual;  
Where nourishment and nurture lie  
And Love enwraps potential.

Celebrate the damaged minds  
Whom God delights to bless;  
The broken bodies, stumbling tongues  
Who joy in His caress.

Celebrate the small and weak,  
The powerless, the lowly;  
For straw and sepulchre, bread and wine  
Have hosted High and Holy

So lay the table! Set the feast!  
Bring finest wine for toasting!  
For God to laugh and dance and sing  
And celebrate *our* hosting.