

## THE RESURRECTION

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*First:* What is the Resurrection? It is the strength of a new life granted to men by Christ's Resurrection and by it we live as the Bible says, "Not for ourselves but for him who for us died and was risen." So the Resurrection is living in Christ and for Christ only.

*Second:* What are the signs that indicate a person who lives a life filled with Christ's Resurrection?

1—The first sign indicating a person who truly leads a life in Christ's Resurrection is a love for Christ that even death itself cannot end. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:35-39)

2—The second sign is a person's love for his brethren: a love that extends beyond all the possibilities of the limits of death that Satan implants in man's relations with others. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14) And these are not merely words or fantasies, but are from the reality of daily experiences.

3—The third sign is a man who views "all matters as working together towards goodness" because the looking glass through which he sees all matters becomes a heavenly one.

*Third:* What are the sources or the means of grace that bring us to the Resurrection of Christ?

Three principal sources lead us to the Resurrection of Christ:  
*1st Source:* A confirming absolute faith in the word of Christ. "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God? I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

*2nd Source:* The simple but mystic participation in the death and the Resurrection of Christ through Baptism and the Holy Eucharist; wherein we are buried with him and are risen with him in a mystery that transcends the human mind.

*3rd Source:* The devout struggle with pain and suffering by carrying the cross and going through death every day with a conscious will. In sharing pain, suffering and death with Christ, we originate our participation in his Resurrection and his glory, as was faithfully and truly promised.

## First Source of Resurrection

The Resurrection is fulfilled first by belief in the word of Christ as it is written, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”. (Rom. 10:17) “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Rom. 10:16 & John 12:38)

Here, the word (i.e. the Gospel) is the first and main source from which we get the power of Christ’s Resurrection, and when the word reaches the level of faith—absolute heartfelt faith—then knowledge rises to the level of inspiration. As it is written in the verse “Who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Through inspiration, the Resurrection flows as an inner strength to the soul and to life, because the word of God is in itself strength. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12) “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)

We should bear in mind that it was by God’s word that the first creation was made and that by Christ and his word the second creation is made through the Resurrection. Here, we should also bear in mind the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the widow’s son at Nain, and Lazarus—all by Christ’s word. Jesus stresses the importance of believing his word with an absolute belief so as the Resurrection can be completed. “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11: 25-26).

*Instances in the Gospel that inspire faith in the Resurrection:*—The Resurrection was the center of the teaching and preaching of the Disciples, Apostles, and preachers of the New Testament. Christ’s Resurrection was the

basis over which the Christian faith was built. Belief in Christ means belief in the Resurrection and Jesus is the Son of God because he rose from the dead through his own divine power. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:" (Rom. 1:4) We see Jesus stressing the importance of belief in his Resurrection when he strongly reproached the two disciples of Emaus for the lack of faith in the Lord's Resurrection when they heard the news. Jesus had expected and still does expect that as soon as we hear the news of his resurrection we instantly believe. He said to them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:" (Lu. 24:25). Likewise, he reproached his disciples for their disbelief in his Resurrection, "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen". (Mark 16:14).

Jesus reproached his disciples for their lack of belief, not only because he had previously referred to his Resurrection in several instances but because his Resurrection was fitting to his sovereignty and divinity, and to all his previous sayings and deeds. He did not rise from the dead by mere chance or with no previous preparations; his Resurrection was with a power conformed with his previous life. Christ requests us to believe in his Resurrection because first, it is a declaration of his absolute power and sovereignty, and second, it is our new life in Him granted to us on the day he rose from the dead. He had formerly mentioned it in detail and commanded his disciples to await it because "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe". (John 14:29) "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19)

The Gospel firmly testifies to Christ's Resurrection. It records Christ's appearances after his Resurrection ten times in different instances throughout the four Gospels.

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul the Apostle recorded the Resurrection with a clear confirmation as a participant in it and as an eyewitness, either by seeing the Risen Christ while in full consciousness and awareness in the middle of the day, or by proof of the power and spirit in his new human being through the mysterious work of the Resurrection. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein you stand: By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this

present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles; And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” (Cor.I-15:1-8)

Paul’s witness to Christ’s Resurrection is the strongest and tops all other witnesses because Paul was a persecutor of Christ, blasphemed against Him, and bore false witness against Him. Because his witness came five years after Christ’s Resurrection, not as a piece of recorded history of an incident; it came as a witness of a man who has drawn power from the Resurrection in his soul, in his mind, and in his body and spirit.

We find that after all that, Paul’s witness and the witness of all the Apostles was supported by their readiness to hold on to it in the face of the fears of the threats of death. They actually suffered, were jailed, and died bitter deaths while they continuously and unceasingly proclaimed witness to the Resurrection of Christ.

## Second Source of Resurrection

*The Resurrection as an unseen power granted to us through Baptism and the Holy Eucharist:*—We do not believe that Christ’s Resurrection is something that concerns Him only but it primarily concerns us too. Christ was risen for our sakes—‘he rose and raised us with him’ as the Apostle Paul says, so in believing in Christ’s Resurrection is included our participation in the Resurrection. Christ died for us in the body so that death may not have any power over us, and may no longer be considered as a punishment for us but as a way and means to the Resurrection and life everlasting. Therefore, Christ’s Resurrection from the dead carries within its power and impression a new life and another birth to all mankind. As the Apostle Peter says: “hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”. (1 Peter 1:1-3). From this verse it is clear that Christ’s resurrection was not Christ’s alone, but it was a Divine act that encompassed all mankind—all those who believe. Christ gave us a second birth by his Resurrection, so we became as the Bible says, ‘children of the Resurrection’ i.e. children over whom death has no sovereignty, “But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” (Luke 20:35-36). From this it is clear how Jesus became the second Adam by whose death and resurrection from the dead, we were born again to everlasting life.

*Baptism gives the concealed power of the Resurrection:*—In order to complete the second birth as Jesus promised Nicodemus, Christ has so

decreed that after believing the word, we are reborn spiritually through his living body by water and the Holy Spirit in Baptism. Christ has given this great importance, especially after his Resurrection as we see at the end of every Gospel — because when we are reborn through Christ's living body, we are instantly transformed into children of the living God—Children of the Resurrection—Children of the cross, the blood and the empty grave over whom death will have no power; or as Christ says, 'They cannot die'. Therefore, we receive the strength and power of the Resurrection as we go through burial in the water; but this remains an invisible and unproven power of the Resurrection until its deeds are fulfilled through the spiritual behavior in the course of life. For example: a baby is born with the potential to stand and walk in his human nature but remains unable to use those potentials until he grows and develops.

*The Eucharist gives us the Resurrection in a form of mutual confirmation:*—In the Eucharist the Resurrection starts taking its clearest form. Here, we eat the invisible body, thus we receive the life that is in it, i.e., we receive the resurrection. The power of this expression is made clear when we know that eating the Eucharist takes place on two levels — a visible living level in the materials of the sacrament — bread & wine; and a spiritual, invisible level when we eat and drink the divine body and blood which are 'true food and true drink'. The truth is 'alithia' something that transcends the senses and human brain, 'Alithia' is here Christ himself, 'I am the truth'. Therefore, in the Eucharist, we eat Christ — the risen Christ in a spiritual body — eaten in spirit as truth is. We eat it and drink it and unite with it, as we eat the bread and drink the blood, which are then transformed within us as strength and energy for the continuation of our bodily life.

In the Eucharist, we receive the Resurrection as a power that flows in our soul giving it spiritual energy, light, holiness, purity and everything necessary for everlasting life and the way to heaven for all the children of the Resurrection. Every time we eat the bread of the Eucharist and drink from the cup we are confirmed in Christ's Resurrection and Christ's Resurrection is confirmed in us day after day so that we may fulfill the will of the Father as children of the Resurrection. Thus, the Eucharist is a nourishment for the Resurrection and an eternal remedy that cures all the ills of the children of death. It is the food of the wedding guests who are invited to eat from the Lamb in eternal bliss.

### Third Source of Resurrection

*The Resurrection in the Devout Strife:*—We are called to carry the cross before we are called to the glory of the Resurrection, not as a weight or

punishment or penance, but as an official way to the Resurrection.

The Resurrection starts in Gethsamane, with the continuous worship, perspiration flowing down with blood, and the depression and fright of the feeling of the closeness of death; and continues from Gethsamane, on to Calvary through Annias and Caiaphas and Pilate with the ridicule and disgrace and then on to death and the grave. Then shines the cross and from the Resurrection comes out the most delicious fruit man ever tasted.

We have previously mentioned in the first source that through belief in the word of God, our intellects are opened to absorb the light of the splendour of the resurrection, thence, intellectual happiness that elevates the mind to eternity and Heaven.

In the second source, we tasted the Resurrection in the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist — as water for life and true food if anyone eats from it he shall never die—A good taste that is renewed for us every day on the altar.

Here, we are called to taste the Resurrection through the reality of the bitterness of pain, sorrow, and oppression: a true taste just as Christ tasted pain, injustice, infidelity, and after the bitterness of death, the delight of the Resurrection and its splendid feeling that cannot be described.

We are called to taste the Resurrection from all the bitterness of pain, oppression and self-denial and the effort on our part for the love of Christ and our brothers.

When Jesus crossed the Garden of Gethsamane towards Calvary, the vision of the daybreak of the third day was always before his eyes, so was the scene of the hill of the Ascension very clear to him because the feeling of the Resurrection never departed from him.

The sense of the Resurrection was with Christ before the suffering; so it made the pain bearable even tasty or delicious, 'The cup that God gave me shall I not drink it?' So Christ also gave us the secret of the Resurrection before the suffering, not only to help us through the pain like him, but so the sense of the Resurrection may grow and multiply, and so we feel its strength through the bitterness of death.

Every suffering we go through implants in us the feeling of the Resurrection in the same ratio as it gives us bitterness, sorrow and oppression. The Resurrection is in fact not manifested in pain and oppression until their pressure is increased and the smell of death rises from them. Thus, the Resurrection of Christ has become the strongest support on which we can lean in times of pain and oppression. Also, pain and oppression have themselves become the strongest practical and actual means through which we ourselves go every day and cross over from death to the Resurrection.

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Finally, if belief in the word is considered the first source which introduces us to the reality of the Resurrection; and if the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are considered the invisible second means of accepting the Resurrection as a living act, so suffering will always remain the daily source for the secret of the Resurrection from which the energetic ascetic drinks without fill to the end.

*Translated by Lily H. Soliman*