



# Theology Corner

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## “What Does the Resurrection Mean for Us?”

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In speaking of the Resurrection of Christ, St. Paul told the Corinthians: “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” (1 Cor 15:14). This is a striking message because it points to the fact that the Resurrection is essentially a confirmation of everything that Christ said and did – it was proof of his divinity. There were a handful of people who Christ had brought back from the dead (e.g., Lazarus, the son of the widow, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue), but the difference is that these people rose again by the power of another (namely, the divine power of Christ) while the Resurrection of Christ occurred by his own power. Another difference from when others have resurrected, is that they rose from the dead returning to an earthly life. Christ, on the other hand, rose again into a life of glory. Thus, from the aspect of Christ, he resurrected in a way altogether different from any other resurrection attested to by the scriptures, and this was done as confirmation of just *who* he was – the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

Aside from the fact that the Resurrection confirms who Christ is, what else does it mean for us? Well, it means *everything*. In dying on the cross, he atoned (payed the price) for our sins, but in rising “he opens for us the way to a new life” (CCC, 654). Another way to say this is that when Christ died as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, he freed us from the bondage of sin so that there is nothing standing in the way to having a right relationship with God. But the Resurrection of Christ is the source of our justification. In rising, he actually opens up his arms to us so that we may participate in his victory over death and share in the divine nature by grace. The Resurrection strengthens us in the virtues of grace: faith, hope, and charity. It strengthens us in faith insofar as it solidifies just who Christ is and what his actions mean for our lives. It strengthens us in hope because we know by faith that as long as we cling to the Resurrection, we too may be victorious over death by the merits of Christ. Lastly, it strengthens us in charity as we rise from sin in our lives *right now* through grace being gifted with the ability to love as God loves. This would not be possible without the participation we are given in his risen life!

This new life of justice is made *possible* by the Resurrection and made *actual* by the sacrament of Baptism where we are all united as one family of God through adoptive filiation. Just as we may have brothers and sisters in the order of nature, we all become brothers and sisters in the order of grace by virtue of the Resurrection. It is for this reason that we should rejoice together this Easter knowing that although we cannot gather together physically, we are all united by grace and in spirit because of this Resurrection which God willed from eternity so that we may be one with him.

Let us all pray that we continue in this new season by cooperating with God in an ongoing sanctification, persevering and drawing closer to Christ at every moment of our lives so that we “by his passion and cross may be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.” (Angelus prayer). Just as Christ did not resurrect immediately after his birth, neither do we immediately do so. The graces of the Resurrection which we celebrate today are not like graduation – they are just the beginning! Everything that we have been doing during the season of Lent should be ongoing. Our lives of increased prayer and fasting should continue. The point of the Lenten practices is to develop habits in us that will take us into the season of Easter and beyond. The liturgical seasons are ordered this way so that in the season of Lent we may rid ourselves of the disorder of sin and rise from it along with a celebration of the risen Christ. Let us rejoice that he is risen and let us also rejoice in the fact that our souls may be renewed and led to a life of glory in a loving union with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christ is Risen. *Alleluia, Alleluia!* Amen.