

Stations of the Resurrection

INTRODUCTION

Sign of the Cross

Reading:

'If in union with Christ we have imitated His death, we shall also imitate Him in His resurrection....We believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with Him. Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over Him anymore.' (Romans 6: 5,8-9).

Reflection:

On this Easter morning let us follow these Stations of the Resurrection, as daughters and sons of the light and as witnesses of the Risen Lord Jesus. Together let us reflect upon the resurrection of Christ and discover the pathway of light that Jesus blazes through our lives.

FIRST STATION Jesus Rises from the Dead

Reading:

"The angel of the Lord said to the women: 'Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said He would. Come and see the place where He lay.'" (Matthew 28: 5b-6).

Reflection:

On the first day of the week, Jesus arose from the dead. No one saw the event, yet like His apostles, we are called to be witnesses to His resurrection.

Prayer:

This is the day, Lord God, that You have made! We rejoice in Your victory over death. We remember the times we came to You, Lord Jesus, without hope, and You gave us hope. At other graves we have been troubled and afraid, but at Your empty grave we have found peace. Refresh our memories of that day when we first knew You were alive, risen and active in our lives. We cling to Your promise that one day we too will share in Your resurrection. Please dispel all of our doubts. Amen.

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

SECOND STATION The Disciples Discover the Empty Tomb

Reading:

"Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together. The other disciple reached the tomb first, but did not go in. Peter went right into the tomb. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed" (cf John 20: 3-6,8).

Reflection:

The empty tomb is a silent witness of the event upon which our faith is anchored. If Jesus has not been raised from the dead, our faith is in vain, and we have not been freed from our sins. This empty tomb is where we discover the wonder of the resurrection. It is a place where we can be still, and know that God is God indeed.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You were dead in the tomb and now you live forever. We, too, know what it is like to be dead in our sins, buried in impurity, broken and lost. Your risen life gives us life and hope and in the power of Your resurrection our lives become totally new. Even though we are easily scared and confused, You always come to comfort us. Please fill our hearts with the joy and peace of Your eternal Life. Amen.

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THIRD STATION The Risen Lord Appears to Mary Magdalen, apostle to the Apostles

Reading:

"She turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?' She thought He was the gardener and said to Him, 'Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you laid Him, and I will take Him.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni,' which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, 'Stop holding on to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to My brothers and tell them, 'I am going to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.' So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had said these things to her." (John 20: 14b-18).

Reflection:

Jesus keeps His promise that those who serve Him will be honoured. Mary of Magdalen stood at the foot of the Cross, a steadfast witness to His crucifixion and death, and now He honours her by making her a first witness of His resurrection and entrusting her with the mission to take that news to His disciples.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, like Mary of Magdala, without You we are lost, and troubled. Find us again. Call us by name again. Help us to recognise You in the people You send to us. Help us to encounter You in the person we least suspect. Please grant us the Easter joy of re-discovering Your risen presence in unexpected places in such a way that we want to share it with others. Amen.

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FOURTH STATION The Risen Lord Appears on the Road to Emmaus

Reading:

"...It happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.... And He said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24: 15, 25-27).

Reflection:

These disciples were walking away from Jerusalem in defeat and dejection. They had lost hope. The Risen Lord met them along the road, even when they were moving in the wrong direction. How wonderful His mercy that although they had given up on Him, He never ever gave up on them! Only Jesus can help us make sense of the pain and suffering in our lives.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You are alive, truly alive! You are with us, but often we do not recognise You. Sometimes all we can see are the echoes of Your Cross in our pains, griefs and struggles and we forget that You are risen. When we have forgotten Your promises, Your faithfulness and Your resurrection, take us by the hand and gently remind us. When the times of suffering come to us, we will trust in You Lord Jesus that they are part of God's loving plan. Amen.

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FIFTH STATION The Risen Lord is Recognized in the Breaking of the Bread

Reading:

" ...They urged Him, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.' So He went in to stay with them. And it happened that while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us'" (Luke 24: 29-32).

Reflection:

Walking with Jesus as our teacher leads us to long for a deeper relationship with Him. The disciples on the road did not want Jesus to go, they wanted to become friends with Him, family with Him. Jesus by His swift response to their request, shows that He wants a deeper relationship too. And then He surprises them by revealing the total gift of Himself and His real presence in the breaking of the bread.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You are truly present among us, and Your love gathers us together. Like those disciples we ask You to open the Scriptures for us, and be among us each time we break bread with friends and break bread in the Holy Eucharist and Communion services. Stay with us always and help our hearts burn with love for You again. Amen.

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SIXTH STATION The Risen Lord Appears to the Community of Disciples

Reading:

"'Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have,' And as He said this, He showed them His hands and His feet" (Luke 24: 38-40).

Reflection:

When Jesus comes we are troubled because we remember that we ran away and hid when He needed us, and the wounds He endured for us make us ashamed of our paltry response to His love. We wonder whether He still cares for us after we have betrayed Him so badly. Yet here He is, inviting us to look closely at these wounds, to touch them and to let our hearts be assured by them of His eternal mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus we see the wounds the iron nails have left in Your hands and feet. They are the battle scars of Your love for us. We too carry scars, from operations, accidents and sporting injuries as well as the scars on the inside from loved ones who have hurt us with their words, infidelity and betrayal. Very few of our scars are there because we were doing something loving for each other. Have mercy on us, risen Jesus, and may Your holy wounds bring healing to our souls and bodies, our families and our community. Amen.

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SEVENTH STATION The Risen Lord Breathes Peace and Gives the Power to Forgive

Reading:

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you'... The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained'" (John 20: 19b, 20b-23).

Reflection:

Grief and fear had kept the disciples hidden away. But there is no barrier that can keep Jesus from offering us His peace and forgiveness. It is our choice whether we receive His gifts or not. We choose His peace and forgiveness each time we forgive those who have hurt us. We reject His peace and forgiveness each time we refuse to forgive those who have made our lives miserable.

Prayer:

God of perfect peace; violence and cruelty have no part of Your nature. Through the power of Your resurrection may all those who are at enmity with each other let go of their anger and hatred and become reconciled in friendship. Lord Jesus, I want Your risen gift of peace. I don't want to be crippled up with unforgiveness anymore. From today onwards I ask you to help and bless all those who have hurt me and my loved ones. Please help me to forgive them from my heart. Amen.

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EIGHTH STATION The Risen Lord Strengthens the Faith of Thomas

Reading:

"Thomas...was not with them when Jesus came.... Thomas said, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into His side, I will not believe'...Jesus came...and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see My hands, and bring your hand and put it into My side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe'...Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe."
(John 20: 24-29).

Reflection:

Doubts will come to us all. Even doubts about big things like the resurrection. But doubt can be a gift that leads us to greater faith in Jesus. None of the other disciples fell at the feet of Jesus with such a heartfelt expression of faith, 'My Lord and my God!', except Thomas who had struggled with doubt. Let us trust Jesus that if He permits us to have a time of struggle, that it will be for our greatest good and His greatest glory.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father and God of mercy, we thank you for the times that our doubts led to greater trust in You. We thank You for making St Thomas such a credible witness of the resurrection to us. Please take away our fears of seeing the wounds of others, and help us let others see our woundedness too. Thank you for always listening to our prayers, our grumbles and our doubts, and answering us. Amen.

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NINTH STATION The Risen Lord Eats with the Disciples on the Shore of Tiberias

Reading:

"Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish you just caught.' So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come, have breakfast.' And none of His disciples dared to ask Him, 'Who are You?' because they realized it was the Lord" (John 21: 10-12).

Reflection:

Here we see that even after seeing the risen Jesus the apostles are doing some rather normal earn-a-living things. Jesus is doing something normal, too. He is cooking breakfast for His tired apostles. But this event is far from ordinary. Jesus has come to invite them to devote themselves completely to bringing people to Him, and with the huge catch of fish He proves to them (yet again) that He can provide for all their material needs.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, You have touched our hearts with Your mercy and power and yet we so easily spend the days we have left on earth doing things that have little eternal value. Forgive us. Please take us by the hand and show us the simple things we can do to bring others to encounter You. Give us hearts that want to pray for others, that offer up our daily sufferings in union with Your sorrowful Passion, and the courage to talk about Your love. Amen.

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TENTH STATION The Risen Lord Forgives Peter and Entrusts Him to Feed His Sheep

Reading:

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?'... Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, 'Do you love Me?' and he said to Him, 'Lord, You know everything, You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.... Follow Me' " (John 21: 15, 17b, 19b).

Reflection:

The questions asked by Jesus help Peter to renew his love for Jesus after having publicly denied Him three times in His hour of need. What Peter finds is not condemnation but mercy, not rejection but increased trust and responsibility. Jesus shows Peter clearly what He needs as proof of this triple declaration of love. Jesus asks Peter to dedicate his life to the welfare of the followers of Jesus, great and small.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, sometimes we forget that words alone are not enough to show our love for You. We admit, that many times, just like Peter we have betrayed You and disappointed You. Grant us, we beg You, a new encounter with Your mercy this Easter. Please change our hearts so the things that matter to You most become the things that matter to us most. Amen.

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ELEVENTH STATION The Risen Lord Sends the Disciples into the World

Reading:

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 19-20).

Reflection:

How fortunate we are that the disciples obeyed this command of Jesus; all the disciples who were on the mountain that day and all those who have made making disciples their business throughout the centuries until now. When we look back through history, we see that the risen Lord Jesus has always kept His promise to be with us. Truly, truly He has been so faithful to us.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, when we look at these obedient witnesses of Yours we are covered with confusion when we consider our own response to Your command to make disciples. You are with us today, risen and glorious, and we are full of gratitude that You have kept Your promise. As much as we want to, we cannot change our past negligence in Your service. How weak and scared we feel when we understand what it takes to help someone else follow You, but we know that because it is Your command You will give us the strength, courage and knowledge we need. Jesus, from this day onwards, we want to do better. Help us! Amen.

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TWELFTH STATION The Risen Lord Ascends into Heaven

Reading:

"So then the Lord Jesus, after He spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took His seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs" (Mark 16: 19-20).

Reflection:

When we read this account of the Ascension of Jesus, joy and purpose shines through - not grief and sadness. Jesus is with the Father He loves so infinitely, and is continually interceding for us and working with us to spread the Good News of the salvation He won for us on the Cross. He is with us, and we rejoice in that, but we also eagerly look forward to joining Him in Heaven.

Prayer:

Eternal Saviour, we are one day closer to being with you forever than we were yesterday. As we experience the increasing frailties of our minds and bodies, our desires for Heaven increase. But we are still here, so You must have more tasks for us to do. Lord Jesus, please give us everything we need to use the days that remain to us according to Your holy will, eagerly, fruitfully and generously. Amen.

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THIRTEENTH STATION Mary and the Disciples Keep Vigil in the Upper Room for the Spirit's Arrival

Reading:

"When they entered the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying.... All [the apostles] devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brothers" (Acts 1: 13a, 14).

Reflection:

We have our mission, but Jesus wants us to wait and pray first. If we start without the preparation and power that He wants to give us, we will fail. We can't work as lone wolves either, because Jesus wants us to grow in unity with each other and to make a priority of praying together. Who can show us how to pray? Who can teach us more about Jesus? Who can help us learn to love each other and work together? When the father is visibly absent, all the children naturally turn to the mother for help. So naturally the disciples turned to Mary, the mother of Jesus for help, and wanted to be close to her because no human being loves Jesus more than His mother.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we find waiting so hard. We often find prayer unexciting and can't be bothered. Yet You want us to do both, because they teach us the truth we find so unpleasant – that we are not in control, that You are truly God, and that we need to yield the decision making to You. When we look at Your mother, we see the marvels You can do with someone who waits and prays. From now on Lord Jesus we want to do things Your way. Please grant us the help and prayers of Your mother. Amen.

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

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FOURTEENTH STATION The Risen Lord Sends the Holy Spirit

Reading:

"... Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim" (Acts 2: 2-4).

Reflection:

When our hearts have been prepared by waiting and prayer, then Jesus sends us out; then Jesus sends us power. There is no mistaking the coming of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised. We need not be afraid. Someone who rests on us, loves us, trusts us and wants to be close union with us. Someone who fills us is going to do so gently, and gradually at a pace we can cope with.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, Your Holy Spirit brings us into unity with You and with each other. Your Holy Spirit enables us to worship You with one voice and in one endless song of praise. Your Holy Spirit sends us forth to continue Your mission of love and mercy. We ask that You might send Your Holy Spirit today to bring peace to all troubled situations, to bring joy to all those in deep sorrow and to bring hope to all those the darkness is trying to overpower. Amen.

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Risen Lord, we ask Your special Easter blessing upon our loved ones, our families and our friends. Jesus, You alone know just how much we miss them and long to be with them again. Please show them Your mercy.

We pray together now with the prayer You taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your Name;
Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

We recommit ourselves to You in the faith of the Apostles:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, the creator of Heaven and Earth,
and in Jesus Christ His only Son, Our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into Hell, on the third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body
and life everlasting. Amen.

And we pray for all of our leaders, civil and religious, that You may bless, guide and protect them, and particularly that You would do this for Pope Francis because he has so often asked us to pray for him.

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.
(Three times)

Sign of the Cross

Let us offer each other, now, a sign of the risen peace of Jesus.