

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord • Year C • April 20, 2025



*Risen Lord,
you break
the chains of death
with your Resurrection.
All creation exults
over our Salvation!
We give thanks
and praise
to the heavenly Father,
who sent you, our
Savior and Redeemer.
Amen.*

Sunday Word

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

Witnesses to the Resurrection

The Apostles are preparing for their role as witnesses to the Risen Lord as they follow Jesus in his earthly ministry. They see him doing good, healing those bowed down. They see the presence of God in Christ.

Peter acknowledges in his preaching this apostolic role and proclaims the mystery of the Resurrection of Christ. The Apostles ate and drank with the Risen Lord and were commanded by him to testify to the truth of his enduring mission of love, forgiveness, and new life.

Seek What Is Above—Sweep Away the Old

Christ's Resurrection is the firm foundation of our new life. We are to put aside malice and wickedness. The glory of the Risen Lord shines upon us. Sincerity and truth call to us.

Gazing into a Dense Mystery

Scripture is clear. The Messiah had to rise from the dead. But this has not yet been sorted out as Peter and the other disciple run to the empty tomb. They behold the mystery before them. The body of the Lord is not where they laid it. The burial cloths and head covering are neatly set aside. The empty tomb becomes the prelude to their understanding, a pause in silent contemplation before the fullness of faith.

Catholic Teaching: The Resurrection of Christ

Very Real

Christ's Resurrection from the dead forms the central tenet of Christian faith. It is a glorious truth embraced by the very first community of believers, grounded in Scripture, handed on by Tradition as fundamental, and preached as an essential aspect of the Paschal Mystery along with the Cross.

The Resurrection is a real event, something transpiring in time and historically verifiable as testified in the New Testament witness. In the many events that surround the Resurrection, the first element encountered is the empty tomb. In itself, the absence of Christ's body does not provide direct proof of the Resurrection. Yet its discovery by the disciples is the initial step along the way toward recognizing the fact of the Resurrection.

There at the empty tomb, a new era dawned, an era in which we still live—the era of Christian faith. Everything flows from our faith in the Resurrection of Christ and the astounding Good News of our new life inherited in the Risen Christ.

Grasping the Reality of the Resurrection

Clearly the shock of the disciples at the Crucifixion of Jesus and their initial understanding of Jesus' Death, which began with the experience of the empty tomb, show that the Resurrection was not something that happened outside the historical order. The disciples did not act as if they were seized by some mystical exaltation. Their faith grew step by step. Even when the Risen Lord appeared to them, they did not all immediately abandon doubt but still thought they were seeing a ghost.

By physical touch and by sharing a meal, Jesus plainly shows himself to be real and substantial. The Risen Lord also reveals the wound marks from his Crucifixion. This authentic human body of the resurrected Jesus also bears unique properties not limited by time and space, for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth and belongs now to his heavenly Father's realm.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

The Resurrection ratifies Jesus' whole life and teaching. Baptized into his Death by our plunging beneath the waters of the font, we rise as adopted children whose inheritance is the Resurrection.

Even now in this world, as a foretaste of what will come, we partake of the promise of new, risen life in the Eucharist, in the Breaking of Bread. The Church glories in this mystery: Christians, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace through the gift of the Risen Lord and grow together in holiness.

Key Terms

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The bodily rising of Jesus from the dead on the third day after his Death on the Cross and burial in the tomb. The Resurrection is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 638 and Glossary).

CROSS

Instrument of execution upon which Jesus died. This term also functions as a shorthand for the entire redemptive Passion, the suffering, and the Death of Christ. It is the symbol of the unique sacrifice by which Jesus as the singular Mediator between God and humanity saves us. A devotional cross upon which a figure of Christ is suspended or fixed is called a crucifix (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 618).

BREAKING OF BREAD

Describes the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Prior to the Crucifixion, Jesus broke bread with his disciples as part of a Jewish ritual meal, when he blessed and distributed the bread—above all at the Last Supper. In this ritual gesture, the disciples recognize the Risen Lord. It is this expressive phrase that the first Christians used to designate their Eucharistic gatherings, thus signifying that those who partake enter into communion with the Risen Lord (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1329).

Voices of Faith

They see the linen clothes lying there, which was a sign of the resurrection. For if they had removed the body, they would not have stripped it first, nor, if any had stolen it, would they have taken the trouble to remove the napkin and roll it up and lay it in a place by itself apart from the linens. They would have taken the body as it was. —Saint John Chrysostom

[B]y Christ's will there is in this sacrament [of the Eucharist] a continual renewing of the mystery of the sacrifice of himself that Christ offered to the Father on the altar of the Cross, a sacrifice that the Father accepted, giving . . . his own paternal gift, . . . the grant of new immortal life in the Resurrection . . . —Pope Saint John Paul II

Further Reading

***Catechism of the Catholic Church*:** 640 (significance of the empty tomb), 642 (a new era of faith), 645 (the risen humanity of Christ)

***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*:**

Chapter 8 ("The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ"), especially the sections entitled "Historical Event" and "A Transcendent Event," pages 94–96

***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church*:**

126 (central tenet of the faith), 127 (signs witnessing to the Resurrection), 129 (condition of Christ's risen body)