

Easter Sunday  
3/31/2024

## OUR POINT OF CONNECTION

Jesus is risen from the dead! So what. How does the fact that a Palestinian Jew, halfway across the world, two thousand years ago rose from the dead, have anything to do with us and how we live our lives today? What's the point of connection?

That point of connection can be summed up in one word: Baptism. Our baptism connects us to Jesus, it joins us to Christ, it incorporates, which means that it embodies us into him. We're part of a larger whole. In baptism we become members of the body of Christ with Jesus as our head and together we make up the *totus Christus*, the whole Christ. This is all put forth very clearly by St. Paul to Romans when he reminds us that in baptism we're baptized into the death of Jesus so that we might share in his resurrection. Pope Francis has put it plainly saying: *A person who is baptized and a person who is not baptized are not the same.*

In baptism, we share sacramentally in the reality of Jesus' paschal mystery—the movement from life through death into new life that Jesus pioneered and in which we all follow. We're not literally crucified and risen and yet sacramentally, we share in the reality of that work. It's as if Jesus is crossing a stream with us on his back. We don't get wet but he gets us to the other side. In baptism, the story of two thousand years ago to a Palestinian Jew, halfway around the world becomes our story and our hope. Through our baptism we're freed from sin, reborn as children of God, become members of the body of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.

Baptism, is God's gracious gift but it's not magic. Our baptism, although received once, is something that we're called to embrace everyday striving to live lives of intentional faith. It continues to be enriched through Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation and all the other sacraments. It grows strengthened by prayer, informed by the word of God, edified by the example and intercession of the saints, and encouraged by one another.

In baptism we become Christ-ians—little Christs in the world today. All Christians are called to reveal the goodness and love of Christ whether in boardrooms, classrooms, operating rooms, offices, the marketplace, at home or wherever they may find themselves. We're all called to be missionary disciples, each in our own way. Look around, there are a lot more you than of us. We're all called, each in our own way, to share the Gospel.

Today we renew our baptismal promises. We have just completed the season of Lent which is a type of forty day retreat as we prepare to once again rededicate ourselves to Christ.

Mary Magdalen didn't go to the tomb, joyfully remembering the words of Jesus about his resurrection, but rather to make a cemetery visit. She went there *hopeless* and in time would become *hopeful*. As our Easter sequence puts it, *Christ my hope has risen*.

Because of this, Christians are always called to be a people of hope, in the midst of life's uncertainties, sorrows, personal struggles, health issues or even addictions. Amidst social unrest, war and so many other challenges, we continue to be a people of hope because Jesus has risen from the dead.

Jesus has risen. He has truly risen. What does that have to do with us and how we live our lives? Everything. He calls us to new life through him, with him and in him, to let his risen light shine through each and everyone of us no matter who we are, no matter where we are and no matter what we are doing. May the grace of baptism which joins us to Christ, with all its hope and all its joy, shine forth through us so that by not only by our words but by our lives, we may proclaim, *Jesus is risen from the dead* and that makes the difference.