

The 14th Station: Jesus is laid in the tomb. A very large, heavy stone is rolled into place. There is a terrible finality about it. He is gone, it's over. We are alone. Death, it seems, is more powerful than life, evil is apparently stronger than good after all. Evil triumphs over good...so it seems. The disciples on the road to Emmaus express this; they are dejected and say: we thought (past tense) that He was the promised One. The Apostles express this by being huddled in the Upper Room behind locked doors; they are afraid.

But then the unimaginable happens. Our Lord was crucified and hurriedly entombed on Friday because the Sabbath (Saturday) was approaching, a day when Jews were not allowed to do any work. So early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and a few other women, disciples of our Lord, came to our Lord's tomb to do the customary "anointing" of the body with spices. They found the heavy stone rolled back and the tomb empty. Mary Magdalene is distressed. She looks around, desperately searching for the body of our Lord. She sees a man she believes to be a gardener and asks him to tell her where Jesus' body is, if he knows. The Lord calls her by name, and then she recognizes Him. She runs to tell the Apostles – the Lord is alive! He is risen!

For those who have been Catholic their whole life, they have heard about the Resurrection since they were young kids. This is good, but also opens us up to taking it for granted. We can easily slide into a mentality that goes something like: yawn, yes I know Jesus rose, what's for Easter dinner? We lose the understanding, the truth and reality, an understanding of the utmost importance, the sense of wonder and awe at just how astounding, of this event. When this happens, we also lose the great appreciation for Easter, a tremendous sense of relief, happiness, and gratitude to God that the Resurrection should provoke within us. It is a hole, a detriment to our interior life, a lack in our relation with the Lord. If love of our Lord is something I want to take seriously, then, I need to find a way to overcome this, to say: NO! this is not how I want to be, I want to seek the Lord, I want to have not just a passing gratitude to our Lord but a deep, genuine, and heartfelt gratitude. What can I do to open the door to this so that our Lord can give me the grace to have this deep appreciation?

Our Lord Himself gave us the basic answer: SEEK and you will find. This is a positive command, not just some passing words but rather something necessary. The converse is implied: don't seek and you will not find. Recall the example of St Mary Magdalene when she found the tomb empty. There is only one thing on her mind – to find the Lord.

The Lord, then, gives the grace to open our minds to have a sense of wonder and awe and a deep appreciation for the Resurrection, if we sincerely seek. How do I seek? There's simply no getting around it, seeking is something I have to consciously and intentionally do. That means deciding to take the time and making the effort to seek, STOPPING to make the time and effort to do so. Not to do so is to let this need to build interior relation with our Lord pass us by.

What, then, is entailed in seeking? We have to engage this mystery of the faith with our mind. Stop and do what? I have to ponder, think about the Resurrection. How? What should I think about?

What can be said here are just a few examples to help get started. One thing to think about is the question of: why is the Resurrection so important to eternal life? Our Lord said through His servant St Paul that our faith is in vain without the Resurrection. Why? Isn't the atonement through Jesus' sacrifice enough?

Aquinas gives 5 reasons for the Resurrection, one of which is that it completes the work of salvation. Bishop Sheen hones in on this one as well and uses an analogy to help understand it. We will make use of his analogy. Imagine you have killed someone, an innocent person. Even if it was unintentional – maybe through negligence, carelessness, or indifference – the thing would surely weigh heavily on our mind and heart. I am consumed by guilt. What I have done? I can't stand it. The remorse is terrible and I can't shake it. The person is dead and it's my fault. I even try to drown it out with drinking. Then one night, while in this terrible state of darkness, as I'm about to start drinking, I see the person; they are actually alive and in perfect condition, suffering no ill effects, no damage at all, from the terrible tragedy that I caused leading to their death. What would your reaction be? Shock, surprise, almost disbelief even though you've seen it with your own eyes. But

after that moment of shock retreats even slightly, there would be a sense of supreme relief and gratitude. If the man is no longer dead, how can I be guilty of His death? My God, thank you, thank you. My personal sins did cause the suffering and death of our Lord. There can be no Easter Joy, no sense of relief and gratitude, if I just casually leave that aside. It is only with a deep realization of my own part in Jesus' death, that I can really appreciate the Resurrection and experience sincere Easter Joy. Open the door to the Lord by really mulling this over. Our Lord rose from the dead not because it was good for Him but because it was good for us.

Humility is a necessary virtue to have union with God. Our Lord manifests humility, especially in His Passion and death. But what about the manifestation of goodness – which is called glory? Is this never to occur? Do we not desire to have goodness manifested? Is glory not part of the final end? Our Lord's Resurrection answers that question in the affirmative. But what is the goodness to be manifested? It is love. Love is sacrifice of self, including the desire to self-glorify. Thus, our Lord's Resurrection is a pledge that those who accept humility and thus love, will also be glorified – their love of God, sacrifice of themselves, will be made manifest. Does this knowledge not anchor into our minds both hope and confidence in the "The Way?" Aquinas points out that this is part of Divine Justice.

Is the darkness of the tomb our final end? Recall the dejection and fear of the disciples, including the Apostles, after the death of our Lord. If the tomb is the final end of even the incarnate God Himself it would seem that this is all we have look forward to. Our Lord's Resurrection says NO; the human soul lives on forever, but even the separation from the body is only temporary. Life does triumph over death. Good is more powerful than evil, even if at times it seems otherwise in this life and this world. Our Lord's Resurrection is also a pledge of resurrection to life of those who follow Him. This has been mentioned before but it bears reiterating here. Pope Benedict brought out the implication, the truth, of our Lord's Resurrection in a very striking way. He said that with the Resurrection, our Lord created a new way of being human, something superior to even that which Adam & Eve had before original sin. There is much talk today of evolution, the Holy Father said; in modern language, then, the resurrection to life is man's true evolutionary leap. As I ponder this promise, does it not raise within me a great hope and a loosening of the fear of the grave? As Aquinas says: the Resurrection sets in order the lives of the faithful. This is the destiny we are meant for. Does it not make me willing to sacrifice anything of this life and this world so as to be part of that great final end? Every single person who has ever lived will receive back their body at the end of time. For those who chose to bind themselves to the Lord, who humbly and willingly accepted "The Way," they will participate in the resurrection to life, receiving what the Church has come to call a glorified body. For those who chose against our Lord, they too will receive back their body, but not a glorified body. They will not suffer forever not only in soul but in body as well.

But why a glorified body? Are the souls in Heaven not perfectly happy? That is true. Yet at the same time, a human being, as created and willed by God, is both body & soul. There is a certain incompleteness of the person without it, which would be a defect without the Resurrection. So while the souls in Heaven prior to the Resurrection to life do see God face-to-face and thus experience perfect happiness, there will be a completion or maybe we can say an extension (or increase) of that happiness at the Resurrection.

Let us come back now to the beginning, to the main point. The purpose here is to develop a deep and abiding gratitude and appreciation to our Lord for His Resurrection. To do that, we have to seek it. To seek means that a person has to stop (all of the worldly thoughts and activities) and really ponder it, raising our mind to God. The few paltry words of this article are simply a possible aid to help start with that pondering.

A very happy and blessed Easter to everyone! Fr Kuhn