

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
Acts 10:34A, 37-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-9
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Long before we arrive at our Gospel account of Christ's Resurrection, the symbols of the Easter season, the spring flowers, eggs, rabbits and lambs, reveal to us that Easter is a celebration of *new life*. Easter is like our first springtime visit to a sunlit garden, when every glance at new blossoms, every breath of fragrant air, seems an extraordinary privilege. When we reflect back on such moments, we feel sympathy with the young G. K. Chesterton, who wrote in a notebook:

Here dies another day
During which I have had eyes, ears, hands
And the great world round me;
And tomorrow begins another
Why am I allowed two?

But there are shades of sadness in Chesterton's joyful, grateful words, for when evening comes, the day dies. And while we may be allowed another, we know that one such day will be our last. The pleasure we take in a springtime garden, is the more poignant, because we know that the garden must have its winter, and so must we. To live is to leave behind.

In a few days, the flowers that fill our churches will fade. In time, all

earthly beauty withers and dies. Malcolm Muggeridge believed “death is essentially the reason for religion. We could probably rub along if it wasn’t for death, but we can’t, because of the fact of death.”

Nevertheless, countless people, heedless of the futility of the attempt, try to “rub along” without God.

Why? Why, when the Good News is clamoring to be heard, do so many stop their ears? Is it because faith is unfashionable, or the story poorly told? No one who is really hungry hesitates to eat unfashionable food. A starving gourmet would welcome a cold can of beans. And clearly the world is starving for what Easter offers.

St. Paul entreats us, "Be intent on the things above rather than on things of earth." Many decline the invitation. Called to *look up and live*, we continue to keep our eyes fixed firmly on the earth at our feet. Perhaps we’re afraid to look up from our earthly distractions and preoccupations, for fear that if we do, we’ll see our own mortality staring us in the face. Just about able to convince ourselves that this life and its incidents are enough for us, we dare not hope for more, for fear our hopes will be disappointed.

But they will *not* be disappointed. The Good News of Easter is true. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, has endured death and defeated it. And his Resurrection today is a preview of the eternal life that is there for all of us, if we will only say yes to the loving God who offers it to us. C. S. Lewis called death “Satan’s greatest weapon and also God’s greatest weapon: it is holy and unholy; our supreme disgrace and our only hope; the thing Christ came to conquer and the means by which He conquered.”

The Sequence puts it well, “Death and life were locked together in a unique struggle. Life’s captain died; now he reigns, never more to die...

Christ my hope has risen. He will go before you into Galilee.” Christ is risen. In him, we have won a great victory over death --our greatest and most ancient foe. It only remains for us to share in the fruits of that victory.

When we renew our Baptismal promises today, we will announce aloud that we refuse and reject all that is lifeless -- all that is destructive and deadly. We will publicly proclaim that we believe in the God who came into this world as one of us, so that we might have *life* in its fullness.