

**Week 14: April 27, 2011**  
**THE 612**  
**Joseph Hollcraft M.A.**

**XXI. Resurrection (cf. CCC, 638).** With exception to the Sadducees, the Resurrection was a doctrine accepted and anticipated by the Jewish people (Dan.12:2-3; 2 Mac. 7:9). The words of Jesus: ***“I am the Resurrection and the Life”*** (Jn.11:25) direct us to the fact that he possesses absolute sovereignty over life and death. By way of the Resurrection, we have now received the good news of the inheritance promised of Old Covenant (cf. Acts 13:32-33—The Kingdom of David).

- A. 1 Cor.15:14-15: *“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.”* Only if Christ has risen does the Christian message receive its new form. That is to say, only then does God actually reveal himself as all in all. It is the question of either he “was” (and his promises were unfulfilled) or he “is” (and his promises have been fulfilled) (JN: VII, 241-242). For this reason, every Christian is called to contemplate this great mystery.
- a. In our highly technological world, the reality of the Resurrection becomes increasingly difficult to fathom. So many spend their lives explaining it away rather than probing the depths of its mystery. And they try to do this alone, separated from a believing community of Christians, locked in the prison of self and of ideas, frozen before a computer screen as they try to fathom what happened on Easter morning (Rosica).
    - i. The Resurrection was an event transacted between God the Father and God the Son by the power of God the Holy Spirit (Rosica). The depths of the mystery of God are never to be revealed sitting on a chair, but on one’s knees—the disposition of the new man (the man who seeks daily conversion). If we are to understand the nature of this transaction then we must go by way of the transaction itself—via the Trinity!
    - ii. Interestingly, not a single Gospel tells us how it happened. We don't know what he looked like when he was no longer dead, whether he burst from the tomb in glory or came out like Lazarus. What is common to the gospel record is that not a single one records the resurrection. It is an event that is taking place within the mystery of God between Jesus and the Father; by its very nature, the resurrection event lies outside human experience. Let us briefly survey these four gospels and what makes each of them original.
- B. **Mark.** In the earliest Gospel account in Mark’s Gospel (Chapter 16), the last scene is a startling one ... for the story ends with “[The women] came out and fled from the tomb, for they were possessed by fear and trembling, and they said nothing to anyone” (16:8). The most striking aspect of Mark’s ending is that we never encounter the Risen Lord. Instead, we see an awe-inspiring, almost eerie scene (Rosica).
  - a. In the darkness of early morning, the women arrive at the tomb to accomplish a nearly impossible task. These women are the only ones who follow Jesus to the foot of the cross and to the tomb. They find the tomb opened and empty, and are greeted by a heavenly figure who gives them a commission: “Go and tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee; there you will see him as he told you” (16:7).
  - b. Mark’s Resurrection account intends to undo the ease that makes one forget that the call to discipleship is the call to the cross. Readers of Mark’s account are invited to view their lives in the shadow of the cross.
- C. **Matthew.** In this gospel Matthew tells the story of the resurrection in four scenes: the women’s experience at the tomb (28:1-7); their short encounter with the risen Lord (28:8-10); the Jewish leaders’ attempt to suppress the story (28:11-15); the appearance to the disciples in Galilee

(28:16-20). The final scene, ending with the Great Commission (28:19-20), stands on its own as a programmatic conclusion to the entire Gospel (Rosica).

- a. The women present in Matthew's Resurrection chapter experience the earthquake, the appearance of the angel, and the emptiness of the tomb -- all of which are signs or traces of divine activity that has brought these things about.
  - b. Matthew literally makes Jesus present in the last scene of the Gospel on the mountain where Jesus had directed the disciples to go (28:16-20). At the end of the Gospel, he points us back to the first programmatic sermon of Jesus on the mountain in Galilee (5:1-7:21). Matthew's meek and humble Jesus is the teacher as well as the example of meekness and humility. In revising Mark's Gospel, Matthew deliberately completes the picture of Jesus and of the Christian life.
    - i. Here, we have an important piece to Matthew's vision of the Kingdom of God and its link to the Resurrection. Essentially, Christ tells the disciples to proclaim the good news that Christianity is alive and well and the Kingdom of God is a realm of the living and not the dead. Moreover, that this message be imbued with the practice of the beatitudes.
  - c. The bleak image and invitation of the cross and the dead Jesus are filled out with a living and present Jesus, whose words, reflected upon the Scriptures of Israel, offer a consoling and learnable "way" for those disciples willing to learn. Matthew issues the call to learn of the meek and humble Jesus.
- D. **Luke.** The Easter chapter of Luke's Gospel (24), like a beautiful symphony, presents us with a biblically oriented pastoral practice and distinct way of Christian living.
- a. In the first movement (24:1-12), God alone breaks open a helpless situation.
  - b. In the second movement of the marvelous story of Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35), God, in the person of Jesus, accompanies people on their journeys through despair...*Jesus as a friend*
  - c. The stories of the third movement (24:36-53) lead people into an experience of community (cf. below for additional points on Emmaus and the Eucharist).
- E. **John.** John tells of appearances of the Risen Lord in both Jerusalem and Galilee. The resurrection stories of the fourth Gospel are a series of encounters between Jesus and his followers that reveal diverse faith reactions.
- a. Whether these encounters are with Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple, Mary Magdalene, the disciples or Thomas, the whole scenario reminds us that in the range of belief there are different degrees of readiness and different factors that cause people to come to faith.

**XXII. The Resurrection and the New Man.** The new man is about our new dimension of existence that is about our new form of life that is no longer subject to a law that is outside of any animating principle (exterior verses interior), but the law of life—Jesus Christ (244). The in breaking of the new Adam is the in breaking of a whole new earth; a whole new world (245), and it was the Resurrection that was the starting point for understanding this, because the day of the Resurrection was the first day of the week, which from the vantage point of antiquity was the creation of the world. Christ came to establish a new creation, a new world...Rev.1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.

- A. As Benedict notes, the Resurrection is not a matter of just the head where we are trying to compute theory and ideas, but a matter of the heart that can only be experienced and learned through a community's worship and liturgy. In a manner of speaking, to be fully experienced and grasped, the Resurrection requires an environment of hauntingly beautiful music, of smoke and incense, bread and wine, murmurs of greeting and shouts of joy, dazzling colors, etc...
  - a. The day of the resurrection was the Day of the Lord; the Day of his Presence. In essence, the resurrection became the inner point to the liturgical celebration. After "remembering" Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice they entered into praise with Psalms and hymns of joy

to God. For this reason, “The Resurrection is the starting point for the Christian shaping of the legacy of Jesus. The Resurrection is what makes possible the sharing of himself out beyond earthly corporal limitations” (God is Near Us, 61). By way of the Cross and Resurrection, death and life have new definitions to them. As Benedict highlights, these two paradoxical realities emerge as the new vantages point to understand Christianity.

- b. St. Ignatius of Antioch writes that Christianity is defined by those who live consistently with Sunday (cf. God is Near Us, 61-64), and doing this is to live in the poverty of the Eucharist, the powerlessness of truth (here, be sure to note JN:VII, 194). The new man is rooted in the very powerlessness of Christ, which is where the power of God raises us up.**
- B. Jesus' victory over death belongs to the Church's ongoing pastoral and sacramental life and its mission to the world. The Church is the community of those who have the competence to recognize Jesus as the Risen Lord. It specializes in discerning the Risen One (Rosica). As long as we remain in dialogue with Jesus, our darkness will give way to dawn, and we will become "competent" for witness. In an age that places so much weight on competency, we would do well to focus every now and then on our competence to discern the Resurrection.
  - a. “In the end, we are only left with words to try to describe this cataclysmic event, and yet, there are no words -- there are only the wrong words -- metaphors, chains of images, verbal icons -- that invite us into a mystery beyond words” (Thomas Rosica) (cf. PBXVI, 276).

**XXIII. The Kingdom and the Eucharist.** Among the aforementioned themes of the Resurrection and the new man, we also have this theme of the Eucharist and the Kingdom of God (we can begin to see this in the Prodigal Son). Luke’s account of the last Supper is the key text in linking the identity of Jesus as the royal “son of David” with the Church as the Davidic “Kingdom of God”... “eat and drink...in my kingdom” (Lk.22:30). Here we have the manifestation of the Eucharist as the Kingdom’s presence.

- A. Scholars identify ten separate meals in Luke that that can be viewed as foretastes of the Messiah’s banquet foretold by the OT prophets (Is.25:6). Let us briefly consider three:
  - a. The Feeding of the Five Thousand (cf. Lk.9:10-17). The 5000 were satisfied and the twelve baskets were full of leftovers...fullness of the 12 tribes (cf. 1 Kgs.4:20, 8:65-66).
  - b. The Last Supper (cf. Lk.22:16-30). This account was associated with the eminent coming of the Kingdom ... “*I covenanted to you as my Father covenanted to me, a kingdom*” (Lk.22:29-30). Note that this comes right after he establishes the Eucharist.
  - c. Road to Emmaus (cf. Lk.24:13-35). Here, Christ restores the hopes of the redeemed Israel, the Kingdom of David (cf. Lk.1:68-69).