



JESUS CHRIST

The meaning and saving power of his Resurrection

Texts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

THE RESURRECTION - A WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The three divine persons acting together

Christ's Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics. The Father's power 'raised up' Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son's humanity, including his body, into the Trinity. Jesus is conclusively revealed as "Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead". (Rom 1:3-4) St. Paul insists on the manifestation of God's power through the working of the Spirit who gave life to Jesus' dead humanity and called it to the glorious state of Lordship. (648)

The Son of God effects his own Resurrection

As for the Son, he effects his own Resurrection by virtue of his divine power. Jesus announces that the Son of man will have to suffer much, die, and then rise. Elsewhere he affirms explicitly: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (Jn 10:17-18) "We believe that Jesus died and rose again." (1 Th 4:14) (649)

Soul and body remain united in the divine person of Christ

The Fathers contemplate the Resurrection from the perspective of the divine person of Christ who remained united to his soul and body, even when these were separated from each other by death: "By the unity of the divine nature, which remains present in each of the two components of man, these are reunited. For as death is produced by the separation of the human components, so Resurrection is achieved by the union of the two." (St Gregory of Nyssa) (650)

THE MEANING AND SAVING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The confirmation of all Christ's works and teachings

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." (1 Cor 15:14) The Resurrection above all constitutes the confirmation of all Christ's works and teachings. All truths, even those most inaccessible to human reason, find their justification in Christ by his Resurrection has given the definitive proof of his divine authority, which he had promised. (651)

The fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament and of Jesus

Christ's Resurrection is *the fulfilment of the promises* both of the Old Testament and of Jesus himself during his earthly life. The phrase "in accordance with the Scriptures" (Nicene Creed) indicates that Christ's Resurrection fulfilled these predictions. (652)

The Resurrection confirms the crucified one is God himself

The truth of *Jesus' divinity* is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he." (Jn 8:28) The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly 'I AM', the Son of God and God himself. So St. Paul could declare to the Jews: "What God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'" (Acts 13:32-33) Christ's Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son, and is its fulfilment in accordance with God's eternal plan. (653)

The death and Resurrection of Christ bring forgiveness of sin and new life

The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all *justification* that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Rom 6:4) Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace. It brings about *filial adoption* so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren." (Mt 28:10) We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection. (654)

The risen Christ - the principle and source of our future resurrection

Finally, Christ's Resurrection - and the risen Christ himself - is the principle and source of *our future resurrection* : "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor 15:20-22) The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfilment. In Christ, Christians "have tasted... the powers of the age to come" (Heb 6:5) and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may "live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Cor 5:15) (655)

IN BRIEF

- **Christ, "the first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18), is the principle of our own resurrection, even now by the justification of our souls (cf. Rom 6:4), and one day by the new life he will impart to our bodies (cf. Rom 8:11). (658)**
- **Christ's disciples are to conform themselves to him until he is formed in them (cf. Gal 4:19). "For this reason we, who have been made like to him, who have died with him and risen with him, are taken up into the mysteries of his life, until we reign together with him". (562)**

THE DIVINE POWER OF THE RISEN CHRIST IN THE SACRAMENTAL LITURGY OF THE CHURCH

The Paschal mystery of Christ's death and Resurrection abides in the liturgy

In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father "once for all" (Rom 6:10).

His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything toward life. (1085)

Through Baptism Christians share in the death and Resurrection of Christ

Christ will raise us up 'on the last day'; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. For, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, Christian life is already now on earth a participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ:

"And you were buried with him in Baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead... If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." (Col 2:12; 3:1) (1002)

The risen Christ also gives divine power to the apostles to forgive sin

The Apostle's Creed associates faith in the forgiveness of sins not only with faith in the Holy Spirit, but also with faith in the Church and in the communion of saints. It was when he gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles that the risen Christ conferred on them his own divine power to forgive sins: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:20-23) (976)

Through the Eucharist we share the life of the risen Christ

United with Christ by Baptism, believers already truly participate in the heavenly life of the risen Christ, but this life remains "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). The Father has already "raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6) Nourished with his body in the Eucharist, we already belong to the Body of Christ. When we rise on the last day we "also will appear with him in glory" (Col 3:4) (1003)

What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh "given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit" (Syriac Liturgy), preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received at Baptism. This growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of Eucharistic Communion, the bread for our pilgrimage until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as *viaticum* ['food for the journey']. (1392)

Sunday, the day of the Resurrection - meeting the risen Lord in the Eucharist

"By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday" (Vatican II). The day of Christ's Resurrection is both the first day of the week, the memorial of the first day of creation, and the 'eighth day', on which Christ after his 'rest' on the great Sabbath inaugurates the 'day that the Lord has made', the 'day that knows no evening' (Byzantine Liturgy) The Lord's Supper is its centre, for there the whole community of the faithful encounters the risen Lord who invites them to his banquet. (1166)

IN BRIEF

- **The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and his action in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as his own Body. (805)**
- **Sunday, the "Lord's Day," is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the pre-eminent day of the liturgical assembly, the day of the Christian family, and the day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is "the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year." (1193)**