

The message of Easter is not primarily a message about Jesus' body, although we've been trained to limit it to this one-time "miracle." Sadly, the Western church that most of us were raised in emphasized the individual resurrection of Jesus. It was a miracle that we could neither prove nor experience, but that we just dared to boldly believe.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church — in places like Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Egypt — Easter is not usually painted with a solitary Jesus rising from the dead. He's always surrounded by crowds of people — both haloed and unhaloed. In fact, in traditional icons, he's pulling people out of Hades, as you see in the icon in front of you. Hades is simply the place of the dead. It's where a soul waits for God.

Easter is the feast of hope, direction, purpose, meaning, and community. Easter is an announcement of a common hope. When we sing in the Easter hymn that Christ destroyed death, that means the death of all of us. It's not just about Jesus; it's to humanity that God promises, "Life is not ended, it merely changes," as we say in our funeral liturgy and as we experience in nature around us these spring days. That's what happened in Jesus, and that's what will happen in us.



Taizé Service | May 5, 2022

Resurrection: Our Common Hope

Prelude video

Watch and listen to the video "There is a Season" by Tom Kendzia.

Welcome

The theme to tonight's prayer is: Resurrection: Our Common Hope

Springtime is a time of resurrection which we see in the rebirth in nature...daffodils whose bulbs have been in dark and cold, buds on trees; the awakening of hibernating animals, the renewed energy we feel with the warmth and increasing sunlight. Spring's new life is emerging from darkness.

Chant 5x

*O Lord, your cross, we adore and glorify, for your holy resurrection, we praise you Lord of Life.
We praise you and we glorify you. For your holy resurrection, we praise you Lord of life.*

— Songs & Prayers from Taize #50

Scripture Reading

In Matthew 13:40 we read: "Just as Jonah was in the

belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." And in Matthew 20:17-19: "As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.'"

Chant 5x

*Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth.
Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to ev'ry heart.
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to ev'ry heart!
Alleluia, alleluia, joy to ev'ry heart!*

— Songs and Prayers from Taize #18

A Reading from Balthasar Fischer

It is an unusual word that is not native to the English or even the Latin liturgical vocabulary: the word "Alleluia." As a matter of fact, it sounds less like a meaningful word than the babbling of a child, and

when it is sung with many notes for the final vowel, this impression becomes even stronger.

“Alleluia” does, of course, have a meaning. It is a Hebrew word, and down the centuries the church has brought it with her, untranslated (like “Amen”), as a product of the Jewish soil from which she herself sprang and as a reminder of her earliest days. The word is a cry of jubilation meaning “Praise the Lord,” and occurs frequently in the psalms.

But the translation does not explain why the church chose and retained this word from the Hebrew language of prayer in order to express her Easter jubilation, even though in later centuries her own children did not understand the meaning. I think the church meant to say: “In the presence of the mystery that we celebrate on Easter, the mystery of our redemption, our usual intelligible vocabulary is inadequate; when faced with the superabundant mercy of God we can only stammer in amazement like children.”

That is how it is with us Christians: As we gaze at the Sun that has risen high over the darkness and cold of our Good Friday, all well-chosen words are useless. We can only stammer out our Alleluia of wonder and jubilation.

Chant

Sing the refrain: *Alleluia, alleluia; Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Silence 5 minutes

Petitions

Today, the first Thursday of May, is a National Day of Prayer, already established by President Harry Truman in 1952. It is a day when people of all faiths are asked to pray for our nation. Now, let us join our prayers to those of our nation.

Sing twice:

*O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
When I call answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.*

— *Songs & Prayers from Taize #20*

After each petition light a votive candle on the table from the Easter Candle.

1. For government authorities, that they may always remember to obey God and not humans as they create legislation and make difficult political decisions, we pray:

2. For world leaders and politicians, that they will implement policies that protect the common good,

we pray:

3. For all of us gathered here, that we may sing joyfully to the Lord and serve him with gladness, we pray:

4. That the evil imposed on the people of Ukraine will come to an end, we pray:

5. That those still living in emotional and spiritual darkness will soon find the bright light of the risen Christ shining into their hearts, we pray:

6. That the covid-19 pandemic will soon be overcome, we pray:

7. For an end to gun violence in our schools and for protection of all children, we pray:

Others are invited to add their spontaneous prayers and then light a votive candle from the Easter Candle. Those of you joining us virtually, please add your own prayers also.

Let us mindfully pray together the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

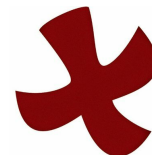
Closing Prayer

Chant 5x

*Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace, alleluia!*

— *Songs & Prayers of Taize #28*

Thank you for coming. Join us again on June 2, for our next Taize Prayer Service.



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