

EASTER 2022

Easter is about more than the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What happened to and by him that Sunday dawn had an effect on everything that had happened before and everything that happens after that historic event.

When Jesus resurrected, he rose transformed. In John's account of the resurrected Christ meeting Mary of Magdala, the Lord says to her, "Don't touch me, 'for I have not yet ascended to the Father'" (Jn 20:17). There was something otherworldly, even pre-worldly, about the resurrected Jesus. Among the speculations regarding the Shroud of Turin, that cloth on which it appears that the reversed image of Christ in death is imprinted, is a theory that the bodily resurrection of Jesus may have been done in the manner of a divine nuclear reaction of sorts. However, the process, Jesus's human personality now clearly manifested his divine dimension. He was freed from the earthly dimensions of space and time into which he had incarnated; he was once again free to roam footloose in his creation. His atomic energy recharged the molecular whole of the created order. The future of the world became the future of God Himself.

To better appreciate the purpose of the Resurrection we have to understand the necessary precondition of it. Resurrection began in death.

Jesus was not excused from the human experience of death, but because he was perfect, because he was totally human, undiminished by personal sin, he experienced death to its deepest degree. His body did not dissolve to the Galilean dust from which it recently came. Rather the Lord Jesus Christ descended to primordial dust, to primeval matter, to the beginning. The body of Jesus found its way back to creation's pre-existence.

The deathly dust of Jesus retroactively became the divine energy of everything created. Every particle of matter became charged with the body of Christ. Every piece of dirt became

holy dirt. Every dust mote became divinized. “All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life” (Jn 1:3-4). Having reconciled God and man, and having reconciled man to man, separation between heaven and earth has become less clear: “the Kingdom of God is among us” (Lk 17:21). “Christ is all and in all” (Col 3:11).

The cracks in the universe still remain. Chance is still interspersed with natural laws. Random acts of violence and grievous happenstances continue. The sludge of the evolutionary process goes on mingled with divine providence. But the war is won.

In death, the soul of Jesus – that soul that took into itself all man’s sins – he who was without sin, became sin (). The soul of Jesus descended into hell. The soul of Jesus worked its lonely way through every sin of every human: experienced every murder, every rape, every torture, every theft, every betrayal, every lie. Jesus painstakingly endured the deadly effects of every act of evil since the creation of the world until he finally reached the twisted soul of Adam, where the core of sin was to be found.

Jesus carefully unwound the gnarl of deceit and pride and envy and ambition and fear of Adam’s psyche. Jesus exposed the lie of Satan. He quieted the desperate cry of Adam’s anarchy, soothed the spasms of Adam’s anxiety, and relaxed the death-grip of Adam’s guilt. And when our father in sin, our mentor in all that is wrong, was reconciled to the God of his born innocence, then the shackles of humankind clanked harmless to the ground.

To fully experience the radical event of Easter demands a careful balance between faith and reason. If we use only reason, we create merely human utopias that exist – literally – nowhere (*u-topos*). If you use only piety, we create religious myths that exist only in or imaginations and agendas. Easter also demands a realistic appraisal of human worth. If we exaggerate our

personal importance, we summarize the epic novel of history into the short story of our private lives. If we minimize human importance, we miss our individual moment in the cosmic sequence.

The resurrection of Jesus has existential consequences that reverberate deeply in our personal destinies.