

AGGIE CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS TEAM

Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence...

1 Peter 3:15

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The Resurrection of Christ and the Dead

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Presented by: Mike Pratt

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.” –1 Cor 15:17-19

Introduction

Why is the resurrection important?

- It demonstrates the wideness of God’s mercy and the hopefulness of our faith.
- It points to the reality of the Christian faith.
- It orients us toward the ultimate purpose of our creation—life in Christ, eternally.
- “The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ” (CCC 638)

The Resurrection of Christ

Nicene Creed: “He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.”

- Jesus suffered a real, physical death: “When they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into His side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.” –John 19:33-34
- Jesus was buried: “After [Joseph of Arimathea] had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid Him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried.” –Luke 23:53
- On the third day: Jesus was crucified and died on a Friday, or the preparation day for the Sabbath (John 19:31). He remained in the tomb through the Sabbath (Saturday) and rose on a Sunday, the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-10).
- Jesus rose from the dead: “The angel said to the women in reply, ‘Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.’” –Matthew 28:5-6
- Jesus’ death and resurrection fulfilled the Old Testament: “‘Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures.” –Luke 24:26-27

The Nature of the Resurrection

- Suggested reading: CCC 645-646
- Jesus still has a physical body, which still bears marks of the Passion. He is not just a ghost (John 20:27-28).
- Jesus' body is glorified and looks different. Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-16) and the apostles on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:15-16) did not recognize Him at first.
- Not just a return to the same kind of earthly life (CCC 646)

Significance of the Resurrection

- Suggested reading: 1 Cor 15
- Death is part of the debt we incurred because of sin and the fall, and only the sacrifice of Christ could pay that debt (Father David's *Jesus is Lord* talk)
 - What debt could be so great that it requires the sacrifice of a divine Person for payment?
 - What could God love so much that He is willing to pay that price?
- Christ rose so that we, too, might rise
- God's love, power, and mercy are so great that even the sin of all humanity could not stop Him from saving us! But He paid a horrible price for us (watch *The Passion of the Christ* to get an idea). All we can do is respond in faith, as Peter said: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you" (Acts 2:36-38). "The human heart is converted by looking upon Him whom our sins have pierced" (CCC 1432).

Was the resurrection of Christ a hoax?

- The tomb was sealed: "Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. —Matthew 27:59-60
- The tomb was guarded: "Pilate said to them, 'The guard is yours; go secure it as best you can.' So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard." —Matthew 27:65
- The apostles continued to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus, to the point of being threatened (Acts 4:5-22), flogged (Acts 5:17-42), imprisoned (Acts 12:3-10), and martyred (Acts 12:1-2). All the apostles were martyred except John, who died in exile. They received no earthly reward for their persistence in proclaiming the Gospel. Under these circumstances, hoaxers do not persist in their hoax! (See 1 Cor 15:30-32 – Paul says why face death for preaching the Gospel if there is no resurrection?)
- Numerous historical sources besides Scripture prove the existence of Jesus and His apostles, as well as the persecution that the apostles and early Christians endured.

CS Lewis "Lord, liar, or lunatic" trilemma?

The Resurrection of the Dead

Nicene Creed: "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

Stations of the Cross, hymn after 13th station (Jesus is taken down from the cross): "Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted, in three days You resurrected, You did first what we shall do".

The separation of body and soul at death is a temporary, unnatural state, and is a consequence of sin, not part of God's original plan for us. Christ's redemption of humanity is so complete that even death will end. All dead will rise before the general judgment at the end of time.

Consequences of the Resurrection

- Suggested reading: 1 Cor 15
- Our salvation, including our resurrection at the end of time, is rooted in Christ's resurrection: "Just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life" –1 Cor 15:22
- Death will be destroyed: "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" –1 Cor 15:26
- We, too, will rise before the general judgment: "The hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation" –John 5:28-29
- The bodies of the justified will be glorified: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. . .It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." –1 Cor 15:42-44
- Our resurrection completes our redemption: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." –1 Cor 15:56-57

Conclusion

- Christ's resurrection is the capstone of our faith and the source of our hope
- The apostles' continual proclamation of the resurrection, even to the point of death, assures us of the reality of our faith
- How to respond?
 - Rejoice, as the apostles did
 - Repent and be baptized (Peter's speech at Pentecost): "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.' Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, 'What are we to do, my brothers?' Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.'" –Acts 2:36-38

References

New American Bible.

Catechism of the Catholic Church.