

❖ Other Voices ❖

There is no form of early Christianity known to us—though there are some that have been invented by ingenious scholars—that does not affirm at its heart that after Jesus’ shameful death God raised him to life again. Already by the time of Paul, our earliest written witness, the resurrection of Jesus is woven into the very structure of Christian life and thought, informing (among other things) baptism, justification, ethics and the future hope both for humans and for the cosmos.

N . T . W R I G H T , *The Challenge of Easter (2009)*

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
 My heart within me like a stone
 Is numbed too much for hopes or fears.
 Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
 I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
 No everlasting hills I see;
 My life is in the falling leaf:
 O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
 My harvest dwindled to a husk:
 Truly my life is void and brief
 And tedious in the barren dusk;
 My life is like a frozen thing,
 No bud nor greenness can I see:
 Yet rise it shall—the sap of spring;
 O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
 A broken bowl that cannot hold
 One drop of water for my soul
 Or cordial in the searching cold;
 Cast in the fire the perishing thing;
 Melt and remold it, ‘til it be
 A royal cup for Him, my King:
 O Jesus, drink of me.

C H R I S T I N A R O S S E T T I , “A Better Resurrection,” *Goblin Market and Other Poems (1865)*

Surely Christian ethics should ask different questions: Who are we as baptized persons who profess faith in the resurrection? Who or what does the risen Christ want us to become?

GERALD O'COLLINS, S. J., *Believing in the Resurrection* (2012)

Resurrection changes everything. Everything. The reality of Easter—Christ risen, death defeated, sins forgiven, evil overcome, no consequences—is so incredible, in the original sense of the word, that it's beyond believable.

This is why I need more than just Easter Day. If Easter were only a single day, I would never have time to let its incredible reality settle over me, settle into me. I would trudge through my life with a disconnect between what I say I believe about resurrection and how I live (or fail to live) my life in light of it. Thanks be to God, our forebears in faith had people like me in mind when they decided that we simply cannot celebrate Easter in a single day, or even a single week. No, they decided, we need 50 days, seven Sundays, to even begin to plumb the depths of this event. They knew that the riches of this most important event in all of history cannot be exhausted in a single day.

KIMBERLEE CONWAY IRETON, "The Red Balloon," *A Deeper Church blog* (2013)

I regard it as absurd and unjustifiable that we should spend forty days keeping Lent, pondering what it means, preaching about self-denial, being at least a little gloomy, and then bringing it all to a peak with Holy Week, which in turn climaxes in Maundy Thursday and Good Friday...and then, after a rather odd Holy Saturday, we have *a single day* of celebration.

... Is it any wonder people find it hard to believe in the resurrection of Jesus if we don't throw our hats in the air? Is it any wonder we find it hard to *live* the resurrection if we don't do it exuberantly in our liturgies? Is it any wonder the world doesn't take much notice if Easter is celebrated as simply the one-day happy ending tacked on to forty days of fasting and gloom? It's long overdue that we took a hard look at how we keep Easter in church, at home, in our personal lives, right through the system. And if it means rethinking some cherished habits, well, maybe it's time to wake up.

N. T. WRIGHT, *Surprised by Hope* (2008)

Before Jesus entered into his passion, "when he knew that he had come from God and was returning to God, he took a towel, and began to wash his disciples' feet" (John 13:5). The Word became flesh so as to wash my tired feet. He touches me precisely where I touch the soul, where earth connects with my body that reaches out to heaven. He kneels and takes my feet in his hands and washes them. Then he looks up at me and, as his eyes and mine meet, he says, "Do you understand what I have done to you? If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash your brothers' and sisters' feet" (John 13:13-14).

As I walk the long, painful journey toward the cross, I must pause on the way to wash my neighbors' feet. As I kneel before my brothers and sisters, wash their feet, and look into their eyes, I discover that it is because of my brothers and sisters who walk with me that I can make the journey at all.

HENRI NOUWEN, *Walk with Jesus (1990)*

Good Friday is not just one day of the year. It is a day relived in every day of the world, and of our lives in the world. In the Christian view of things, all reality turns around the "paschal mystery" of the death and resurrection of Christ. As Passover marks the liberation from bondage in Egypt, so the paschal mystery marks humanity's passage from death to life. Good Friday cannot be confined to Holy Week. It is not simply the dismal but necessary prelude to the joy of Easter, although I'm afraid many Christians think of it that way. Every day of the year is a good day to think more deeply about Good Friday, for Good Friday is the drama of the love by which our every day is sustained.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS, *Death on a Friday Afternoon: Meditations on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross (2001)*

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine
And feel this day thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

GEORGE HERBERT, *"Easter-Wings" (1633)*