



# Bringing Home the Word



Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord  
April 5, 2015

## The Most Special Church Day

By Janel Esker

Jack, the four-year-old son of my friend, recently made this profound theological announcement: “Easter is the most special church day, because that’s when Jesus un-died.”

I was impressed by his depth of theological understanding. And in a way, he’s right—Jesus did “un-die” on Easter, but it’s not as though he simply returned to his former life. He didn’t un-die in the same way we untie our shoes and the laces go back to being loose or in the

### Sunday Readings

#### Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37–43

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth; He went about doing good so everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins.

#### Colossians 3:1–4

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

#### or 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

Clear out the old yeast.

#### John 20:1–9

Peter and John ran to the tomb. They did not understand yet the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

#### or Mark 16:1–7

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.

way we unlock a door and open it again.

As we know from the post-resurrection stories, Jesus’s situation was quite different. His friends didn’t initially recognize him, he entered through locked doors, he sometimes disappeared from sight. His resurrected self was very different from his previous self, yet it still was Jesus. The angel in Mark’s narrative says it quite clearly: “He is not here”—the Jesus you knew isn’t here, but the resurrected Jesus is quite alive and well.

Jesus’s resurrection reveals a truth not only about eternal life, but also about the new life God offers through the “deaths” in our daily lives. God provides new, resurrected life when we experience suffering or loss, but it often looks very different from our previous life. When we lose a job, God can provide new opportunities, but it’s usually not the same job we had before. When a relationship ends, God can provide a new companion, but it will be a different person and a new experience. All the “deaths”—serious illness, loss of a loved one, leaving a familiar home—cannot be un-died.

Life looks different after these deaths, but then it should—God offers us resurrected life in these moments. That’s the tremendous joy we celebrate today in Easter. †

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Whose faith amazes me?
- What fears inhibit me from being close to others?

## PRAYER

Risen Lord, your life-giving presence gives me hope, strength, and peace. Help me to be your witness of love and compassion in the presence of others.

# The Human Touch in Cooperation With The Divine

By Kathleen Basi

In 1864, Ignatius Strecker, a German immigrant working in a soap factory in St. Louis, Missouri, was dying of a work-related injury that had defeated all medical treatment. He had given up all hope of recovery when a visiting priest brought a relic of Peter Claver to his parish, St. Joseph. Ignatius kissed the relic, and within days, he was back at work, fully healed. His cure was memorialized in St. Peter Claver's canonization cause. Over time, the small immigrant parish became a pilgrimage site, and the church was expanded into a large, ornate shrine.

One hundred and fifty years after Ignatius was healed of what was thought to be devoid of healing, I found myself in the Shrine of St. Joseph on an unusually cool July evening, preparing a concert of sacred music with six other musicians.

The gentleman who had let us into the building threw open the doors to let the breeze help cool the building. As we began rehearsing, a group of young African American boys appeared on the steps. They looked hesitant; as if they weren't sure they were allowed to enter. The man caught sight of them and greeted them with open arms—literally. For the next half hour, he shepherded them around the shrine, explaining the paintings, statues, and carvings. He even sat down on the floor with them in front of one of the side altars to talk about a statue of Christ in the tomb.

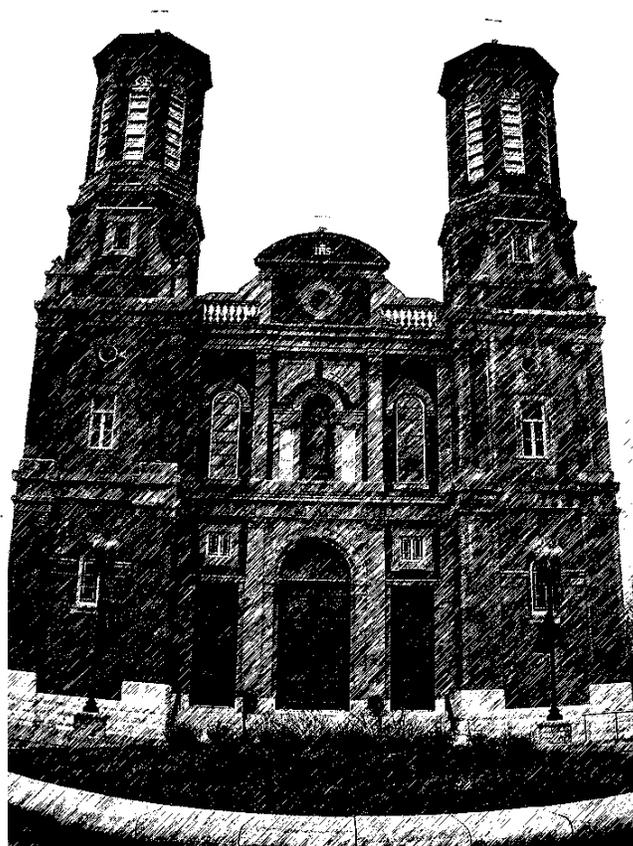


We don't have a lot of relics in America. Yet all of us can understand the attraction of possessing something that once belonged to a loved one. When we touch those items, we're reminded of those who came before us. The human touch, in cooperation with the divine, is a reminder that the value of a relic lies not only in its ability to heal, but in its power to inspire.

Hopefully, we're also inspired to imitate their example. And when we do, we too cooperate with the divine. It can happen in miraculous ways, as it did for Ignatius Strecker. But that miracle—an interaction between men

separated by two centuries—inspired other acts of faith. Acts of faith as grand as building a church and as simple as inviting a trio of neighborhood boys inside to see what we celebrate within its walls.

Throughout the centuries, this is how faith has been born and nourished and spread: in ripples that pass from one person to the next, one generation to the next. Every day, we are given the chance to cooperate with the divine. The question is if we are paying attention when the opportunities arise?



## WEEKDAY READINGS April 6-11

Mon. within the Octave of Easter Acts 2:14, 22-33 / Matthew 28:8-15

Tues. within the Octave of Easter Acts 2:36-41 / John 20:11-18

Wed. within the Octave of Easter Acts 3:1-10 / Luke 24:13-35

Thurs. within the Octave of Easter Acts 3:11-26 / Luke 24:35-48

Fri. in the Octave of Easter Acts 4:1-12 / John 21:1-14

Sat. in the Octave of Easter Acts 4:13-21 / Mark 16:9-15

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