

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017**

***The Resurrection of the Lord***

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

### **THE PERFECT EASTER HYMN!**

*Jesus Christ is Risen Today* is one of the most popular hymns of the Easter Season. The odds are great that most Catholic and Protestant congregations will sing out that song this coming Easter Sunday. The hymn perfectly fits the Easter Gospel of the Lord's resurrection. (John 20:1-9)

Those who encountered the Risen Lord that first Easter certainly proclaimed that song's message to everyone they met. We might even picture them breaking into song.

We can imagine John, who ran to the empty tomb and saw the burial clothes of Jesus, coming to believe and then singing to himself Jesus Christ is risen today as he retraced his steps.

We can imagine Mary Magdalene, whose heartbreak at the apparent theft of her Master's body was transformed into elation when the Risen Lord spoke her name, singing with unstrained joy Jesus Christ is risen today.

We can imagine the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who recognized the Risen Lord as he broke bread with them, becoming an Easter duet singing Jesus Christ is risen today as they hurried back to Jerusalem.

We can imagine the group of frightened and confused disciples that Easter Sunday evening, who suddenly saw their crucified Lord standing before them, becoming a spirited choir singing out Jesus Christ is risen today.

While most congregations will include *Jesus Christ is Risen Today* among their hymns for Easter Sunday, a good number will stop singing it once that Sunday has passed. It seems that in the understanding of many, the "today" of the song refers only to the day the Lord broke the bonds of death and walked out of the tomb.

However, that is not the case nor is it the message of Easter.

Easter proclaims that Jesus Christ is risen and alive this day and every day since he appeared to Mary Magdalene, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and his disciples gathered in the Upper Room.

In fact, the way we number our years professes our belief that the Lord is risen and among us. We say this is the year 2017 A.D. Those two letters abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Anno Domini*, meaning "in the year of our Lord." We do not ascribe a year to someone unless we believe that person is alive and active. Just as we call this year the 64<sup>th</sup> year in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, so this is 2,017<sup>th</sup> year in the reign of Christ our Risen King.

The second verse of that classic Easter hymn proclaims another wondrous truth. It tells us that this is "our triumphant holy day." That is the case because through our baptism we share in the resurrection of the Lord. As Saint Paul told us, "Are you unaware that we who were baptized

into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” (Roman 6:3-4)

Our Easter faith that Jesus is alive and is risen makes this a “triumphant holy day” for us. It proclaims that we who have a relationship with him this day will continue to have a connection with him for days on end into eternity. Death will not have the final say in our life story.

*Jesus Christ is Risen Today* is a hymn not just for Easter Sunday but for every day. It proclaims that the Lord lives and that we have life everlasting through him. Alleluia!

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*Happy Easter!*

*May the Risen Lord bless you with his presence and peace.*