

## Preparing for Resurrection: Dying Faithfully

A presentation of the St. Andrew's Christian Formation Committee

The 4 Sundays of February, 2020, the Christian Formation Committee presents a series of workshops responding to the lived cares of our final days on earth.

- **February 2, Rev. Reed** Resurrection Basics: God's invitation to your own resurrection
- **February 9, Dr. Fred Briccetti & Rev. Linda Spinella** Last Days: What to expect Medically and Spiritually in your care
- **February 16, Bob Wells** A House in Order: Legal and Financial preparations for death
- **February 23, Rev. Reed** Funeral Planning: care of the body, preparing the worship service & burial

## Resurrection Basics: God's invitation to your own resurrection

### The Rev. Reed Loy

#### Part 1: Entering Life

- Reading a Hebrew Bible passage that Christians understand to prefigure the coming of the Kingdom of God (Ezekiel 47, see below)
  - Deep trust in a renewing of the Earth, a fulfillment of God's people
- New Testament (various, see below)
  - Q: What images of resurrection do you see in these stories?
    - A walk through these diverse stories can give us some *humility*, and *courage*, to take up our own images of Christ's power
- The unfolding Christian images of resurrection (wildly simplified!)
  - During Jesus' earthly walk with us: he constantly taught and demonstrated God's Hope, and what he called God's Kingdom (see passages read above, as well as reference his little private teachings to his disciples and apostles)
  - As soon as Jesus dies: The joy and challenge of our interpretation by the Spirit begins
  - "Early Christianity"
    - Impending second coming?
    - Second generation of disciples, God's hope for those who have died before the second coming?
    - Good Shepherd and Garden images profuse
  - Constantinian Christianity
    - Conquering through the cross, Christus Rex, victory in the Eucharistic feast (Lamb)
  - Western Middle Ages
    - Suffering people, suffering of Christ emphasized (esp. crucifix)
    - Increasing complexity of afterlife preparation rituals/requirements
  - Western Enlightenment and Reformation
    - Emphasizes accessibility of Christ, and the fruits of Christ's life, death and resurrection; faith not works (Martin Luther's rallying cry)

- Global Christianity
  - A treasure trove of experience and communal imagination, just being remembered in the West
    - Participation by, through, alongside, holding hands with...the saints!
      - Icons (resurrection of...Mary, Jim, Katelyn, etc.!)
    - Resurrection known in: Christ cosmic power, Christ in the rituals of the home, Christ in the movements of nature, Christ combating evil worldly powers, ecstatic experience (esp. Africa)
      - cross in the lotus flower, Celtic cross, remembering baptism in water deluge in Ethiopia, dancing movement of the human body
- Contemporary Western diversity (a map, not a judgement statement)
  - Calvinism as it has played out; challenge of discovering your predestination
  - Universalism; challenge of going deep with your chosen sharpening stone
  - **Anglicanism: *You're invited to your own resurrection!***
    - That is to say, we do not wait until death to be surprised, or not, by the reality of resurrection. We press through into that reality now, as taught by Jesus, even if it must be a “dim” vision “seen and known in part”.
      - “The kingdom of heaven is among you.” Says Jesus
        - That is, we do not wait until death to seek the ‘reward’ of new life
        - But because our vision of death has so much to do with how we live, we do well to attend to the meaning of death, in order to release ourselves now, today, into Life (full living with God)
        - The Gospel reveals/remembers for us that death is not just one final moment, but that there are many little deaths that happen to us, and may cling to us (by our own volition, by the broken remembering of others) while we yet walk and breathe
          - A proposition: Jesus shows the inevitability of the final resurrection, from the final death, by his action of constant resurrection, from the constant deaths, in daily life
            - This sets us free to a particular call upon our last earthly days, the vocation of Dying
    - “An Easter People”, Anglo-Catholic joining in the praise of God, Verna Dozier’s *Dream of God* (returning access to the laity), *Missio Dei*, Doctrine of the Real Presence
    - This is the context in which I felt quite natural lifting up at Annual Meeting so many Images of Resurrection in our own community

- Communion, baptism, saying “I believe”, making food for someone we do not like-but whom we love
- The image I gravitate towards right now is of Jesus in the garden, which expresses the peace and tended liveliness that I desire, when I see so much waste and carelessness
- See also a classmate of mine who had a crucifix at seminary. Others thought that was morbid, and overly Roman Catholic. But he had grown up in a neighborhood where folks got shot and died, and in the crucifix, he knew Jesus’ power over even a grim death.
- So I don’t think we’ve just marched ever onward to a more and more pure image of the resurrection. I think we’ve been discovering different faces of Resurrection. It’s indeed faithful to say we have been “practicing” resurrection.
  - ...And now let’s turn to Luke 24 to read of Jesus’ own resurrection
- Reading a Gospel account of the resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24)
  - An invitation to claim the resurrection ourselves
  - **Q: What image speaks to your heart?**

## **Resurrection Basics: God's invitation to your own resurrection**

### **Ezekiel chapter 47, A Vision of Water Flowing from the Temple**

Then the LORD GOD brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple...

<sup>3</sup> Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. <sup>4</sup> Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. <sup>5</sup> Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. <sup>6</sup> He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?"

Then he led me back along the bank of the river. <sup>7</sup> As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. <sup>8</sup> He said to me, "... Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes. ...<sup>12</sup> On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail...because the water for them flows from the sanctuary."

### **Images of Jesus' life from the Gospels (Abridged, for a quick walk through many)**

**Luke 19** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ...<sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to upon him in the crowd, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry; for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup> So Zacchaeus was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

**John 9** As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ...He said to his disciples, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, <sup>7</sup> saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

**John 8** <sup>2</sup> Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple, and he sat down and began to teach the people. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman, saying to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ...Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup> ...<sup>9</sup> When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they?"

Has no one condemned you?"<sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

**Luke 8**<sup>26</sup> Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.<sup>27</sup> As Jesus stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ...Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. ...Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ...but Jesus sent the man away, saying,<sup>39</sup> "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

**Luke 8**<sup>43</sup> Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her.<sup>44</sup> She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ...<sup>47</sup> When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed.<sup>48</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

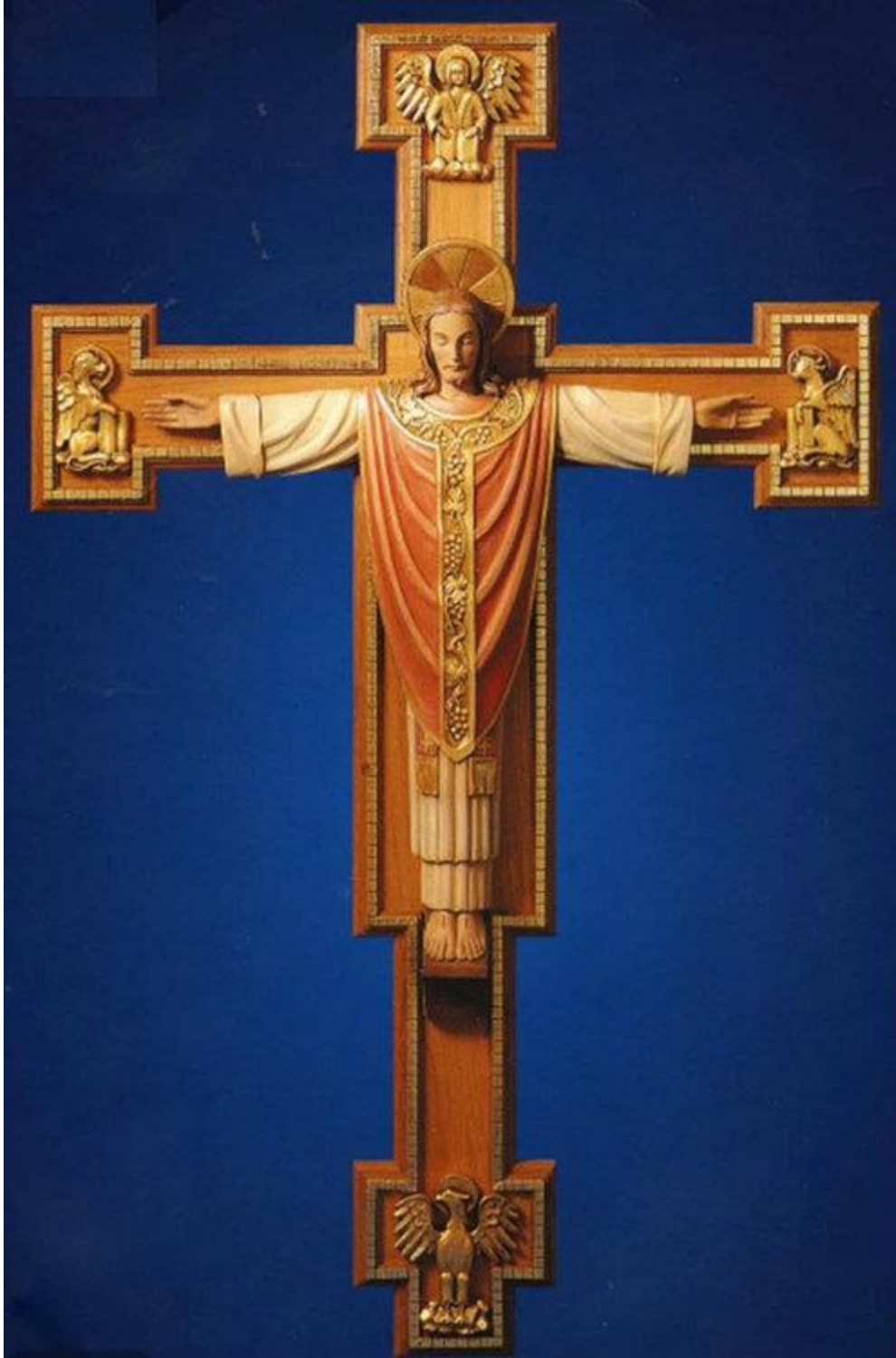
**John 19**<sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."<sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

## **Luke chapter 24, The Resurrection of Jesus**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came to Jesus' tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.<sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>3</sup> but when they went in, they did not find the body.<sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them.<sup>5</sup> The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.<sup>6</sup> Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,<sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."<sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words,<sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.<sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles.<sup>11</sup> But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.<sup>12</sup> But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.



Good Shepherd, 3<sup>rd</sup> century



Christus Rex