

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

Third Sunday of Easter | For Sunday, April 18, 2021

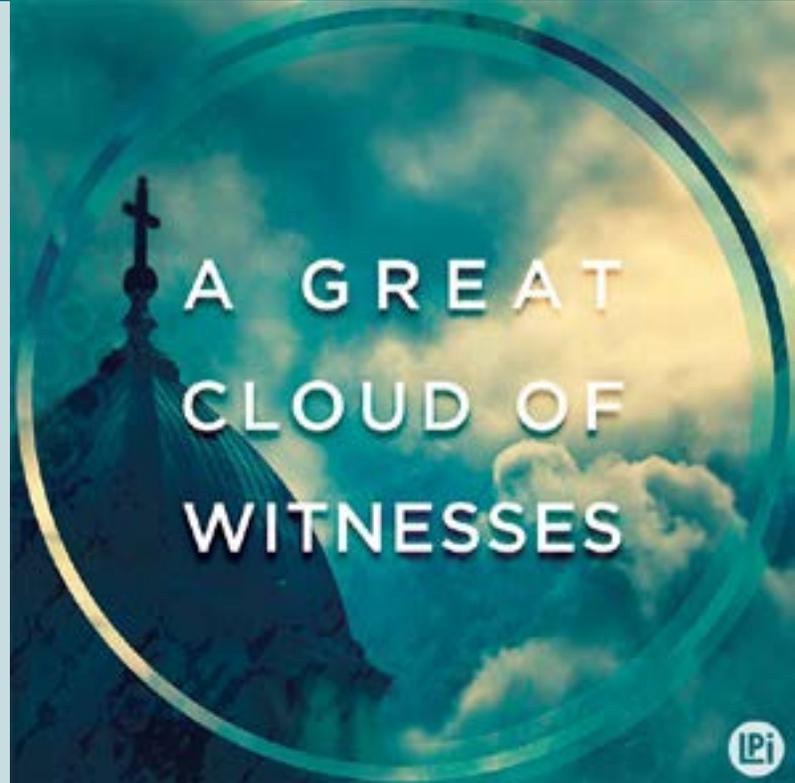
Hope for the Resurrection of Our Bodies

Written by Anna Carter

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

1 John 2:1-5a

Luke 24:35-48



In this last year we've all been reminded of our mortality countless times as we've watched the COVID-19 pandemic sweep over the world. But as part of the Body of Christ, there is a hope that awaits our mortal bodies, and to see it, we need look no further than this Sunday's readings!

"The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses!" The promise of Christ proclaimed by Peter is not only good news for us in the present moment — the redemption from sin — but good news for us for eternity, too. As Catholics, our theology of the end is very specific. While our bodies and souls separate at death, we do not continue on as glowing, disembodied spirits for all of time. The resurrection of Christ foretells our own destiny — the resurrection of the body.

The Apostles lived in a world where, to paraphrase Thomas Hobbes, life was often "nasty, brutish, and short." Among the powerful and privileged, the highest priority was bringing glory to the family name and producing enough strong offspring to continue the line. The rich could hire alchemists and magicians in the quest for immortality and eternal youth. Without modern medicine, any injury could be potentially life threatening and every illness suspected to take a severe turn for the worse. When Jesus hung upon the Cross that Good Friday, even the most hopeful among them had no reason to suspect that — once he was taken down — there would be any more to the story.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Jesus emphasizes what he does when he appears to the Apostles. *"Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see ... they gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them."* Jesus' return is no ghostly apparition. He has

not emerged from the tomb as a luminous being, pure spirit shed of its earthly shell. Jesus is still Jesus. He is still fully God and fully man. When Jesus conquers death, he does so as a human being in his very flesh and blood. Not only that, but he is a human being who still bears the scars of inflicted violence.

In the face of suffering, the thought of sloughing off our mortal coil may feel all too promising. Yet, by his resurrection, Jesus reinforces our bodiliness. He doesn't negate it. Jesus redeems us through the offering of his life and the gift of his body. Through his example, we see that our bodies have moral potential. We act out our sin or sanctity, our vice or virtue, through our bodies. In the second reading, John speaks of just that. *"He is expiation for our sins ... the way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments."* In other words, while the grace of God is living and effective in our life, our choices matter. And we enact those choices in and through our bodies. Our hands extend an offering to the poor. Our feet operate the gas pedal in our car to move us to church on Sunday. Our brains process the decision to obey God or to deny Him.

Our bodies matter. Life matters! Christianity is not a denial of the material world but a participation in its sanctification. This Third Sunday of Easter, be aware of the choices you make in and through your body. How do you reveal your love to your friends? What decisions do you make about the food and drink you consume and offer to others? To whom do you offer them? When you look at your own wounds — physical and emotional — how do they affect the way you see the world and interact with those around you? Remember, we worship a resurrected God. We are disciples of a resurrected Savior. *"Of this we are witnesses."* Will we choose a life for all the world to see?

Anna Carter

PRAYER

Lord,
You have given me a body
for it to help me fulfill
my mission on earth and for eternity.
By baptism,
it was consecrated just as was my soul.
Today I renew that consecration
and submit my body to your service.
Help me acquire over my body absolute control,
so that it will always be an instrument,
not a tyrant.
Give it strength and endurance.
Help me reject whatever is harmful to it:
too much eating, drinking, smoking;
abuse of drug or sex.
Help me have the will
to deprive it at times of normal pleasures
as acts of sacrifice and as exercises in character
building.
May the frequent contact with
your Body in the holy Eucharist
make it sound and pure.
Amen