

# **My Catholic Faith! Study Group**

## **Session 5 - Death has no Victory - The Resurrection!**

### **Pre-meeting Prep**

Participants should be asked to read Chapter Five of the *My Catholic Faith!* book prior to this meeting.

### **5 minutes - Gather**

Snacks and informal social time as people gather. Try to be punctual and gather everyone together no longer than 5 minutes after the scheduled starting time.

### **5 minutes - Opening prayer and Scripture**

Everyone sits quietly as the leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and then invites a period of silence in the following way:

***Let us quiet ourselves as we begin this study of our glorious Catholic faith together. "Lord, as we sit here for a minute in silence, help each one of us to bring our own questions, concerns, fears, and joys to You. Help us, in this moment of silence, to be attentive to Your gentle voice speaking to us, directing us, and calling us to a deeper faith."***

Take about a minute in silence with eyes closed so that each person can speak to our Lord about their own particular cares and concerns.

Leader reads the following invitation: ***Let us ponder the Word of God. Let us reflect upon our own faith journey with the following questions: Do I believe? How deep is my faith? Am I open to letting God speak to me? Am I open to the Word of God and willing to let God's truth sink in more deeply? Am I willing to let this new faith change my life?***

The leader of the session prayerfully reads the following Scriptures, one at a time, pausing for about 30 seconds between each verse:

Matthew 28:1-10: After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you." Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to

announce <sup>5</sup> this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Matthew 17:1-9: After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Revelation 21:1-7: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God). He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away." The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true." He said to me, "They are accomplished. I (am) the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son."

Leader then says: ***Let us take a moment in silence to reflect upon these words.*** (a minute of silence) The Leader invites everyone to close their eyes as the following prayer is prayed aloud:

***Lord Jesus, You have risen from the grave! You have overcome sin and death and have triumphed gloriously!***

***Lord, You are victorious in every way. As I ponder Your resurrection from the dead, help me to see in this act the restoration of all life. Help me to see that my life and the lives of all Your children are restored and transformed in a new and glorious way through Your resurrection.***

***Lord, You are truly victorious in every way. Help me to see in Your Transfiguration a small taste and foresight of that new life to come. Help me to see that the old ways of sin and death will one day pass and all that will be left are glory and newness of life.***

***Lord, You are victorious in every way. Help me to have faith and hope in the new Heavens and new Earth to come. Help me to look forward in hopeful anticipation of this glorious moment when You will come and make all things new.***

***Jesus, help me to have great hope in Your resurrection and to believe in it with a fervent faith. Jesus, I trust in You and have hope in You.***

The prayer time concludes with everyone professing the Apostles Creed:

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.***

#### **45-50 minutes - Discussion questions**

Each person should be invited to share something or ask a question, if he/she chooses, regarding the questions/discussion starters below. Go through one question at a time, and give each person an opportunity to say something if he/she chooses. Avoid having one or two persons dominate the discussion. Go around the circle and do not be afraid to share! Your insights might assist someone else in their understanding of the topics. Your question might very well be the same question someone else has. Some of the questions below will invite a personal sharing; other questions will invite you to share with others what you read in Chapter Five. The goal is to share personally and to also make sure that the faith of our Church is clearly expressed and understood by all.

1. Have you thought much about the fact that the Resurrection of Jesus was a true historical event? Try and think of it from that perspective. Imagine what it would have been like to have been an eyewitness to this event. What would you have thought and said if you were there? What sort of impact would it have had on you? Would your faith have been deeper if you were an eyewitness?

2. As we ponder the Resurrection of Jesus, we see that this historical event was different than when Lazarus came back to life. Jesus did not just resume His life as if He had never died. Rather, He was resurrected. What is your understanding of the difference between being brought back to life and being resurrected?
3. What is the relationship between the Resurrection of Jesus and the Trinity? Specifically, how does the Resurrection affect all of humanity in our relationship with each person of the Trinity?
4. Think about all those people who saw Jesus resurrected with their own eyes. What did they see? Did they see the full glory of the Resurrection? Was there a veil over Jesus' glory? What do you think the difference would be between seeing Jesus in resurrected form right after His resurrection and seeing Him in Heaven?
5. Where did Jesus ascend to? Where is that "place" He went to? Discuss this mystery of ascending to the Right Hand of the Father.
6. Every Sunday we profess that Jesus "will return again in glory to judge the living and the dead." What does this mean? Discuss it carefully. What will His return look like? When might it happen? Does anyone know? And what will His judgment of the living and the dead look like?
7. When a loved one dies, we say that the deceased person is "laid to rest." When Jesus returns, we believe that everyone will rise. Discuss this carefully. What will the new Heavens and Earth look like?

### **20 minutes - Final Reflections and sharing**

Go around and give each person an opportunity to share any other final thoughts. What stood out to each of you the most? Do you have any lingering questions or confusion that others can help clarify?

### **5 minutes - Closing prayer**

Leader begins with the Sign of the Cross and invites a minute of silence with all eyes closed. Each person should reflect upon what was discussed, especially what stood out to him/her the most.

Leader then prays the following prayer:

***Lord, You are ever victorious and glorious. You have already won the final victory over sin and death, and one day, You will return again in glory to judge the living and the dead.***

***Lord, when You return again all things will be made new. At that time, justice will be established, and all will face Your glorious and just judgment. Help us to have hope and consolation in this coming moment. Help us to know that every injustice and every wrong will be made right. Help us to have hope and confidence that all will be made right in You.***

***Lord, as we await this final moment of Your justice and judgment upon the world, help us to endure the harshness of life with faith and surrender. Dispel all despair and help us to find hope in the coming fulfillment of Your promise. Help us to keep our eyes fixed upon the new Heavens and Earth. Lord, You are ever victorious and glorious. Jesus, we trust in You.***

Leader then invites everyone present to offer their own prayer in the following way (Note: This can be done out loud, but it might be preferable if it's done in silence at the discretion of the leader):

***Let us now each bring our own personal concerns before our Lord, trusting that He hears us and knows all we need. Let us entrust these prayers to Him with full confidence that He desires to take control.*** (Take a minute of silence for each person to speak to God about their own personal needs for the night or day).

Leader then invites everyone to close with the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.