



# EASTER, SYMBOL OF A NEW BEGINNING

Rev. Fr. **VICTOR SILVA**  
Director, Subodhi Institute  
Piliyandala

**“This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it” says St. Paul**

**O**n Easter Sunday, the Universal Catholic Church and all other Christians in the world celebrate joyfully, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, their Lord and Master, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world - His resurrection to a 'New Life.'

In most of the Western and European countries, there is this traditional custom of 'Easter Egg.' Eggs, beautifully decorated with colours and drawings, take the pride of place at the Easter breakfast table both at homes and in hotels.

We find this beautiful custom also in Sri Lanka, especially in our convents of religious nuns. The whole idea is the new life that comes from an egg – new birth of a chicken – when the shell is broken. This is a meaningful symbol of resurrection at Easter.

So is the beautiful white flower named 'Easter Lilies' in the countries where the change of seasons occur annually. On Easter Sunday, many churches and homes are decorated with 'Easter Lilies', white and bright, symbolizing once again the resurrection of Jesus.

All throughout the Season of Winter, these flower plants lay buried in the cold frozen earth. But when the 'Spring Sunshine', showers and makes the lilies to come alive breaking through the ground and blooming beautifully adorning the environment, gardens and homes. Likewise, buried under the earth for three days, Jesus rose again, to a new life in all its splendour, power and glory.

No ground could hold him down. As it was foretold by the prophets of old and it was in the sacred scriptures. Later on, Jesus himself, predicted to his apostles about his own suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection.

Jesus was a kind of Environmentalist - A nature lover. He used many examples and images, experiences of Nature in his preaching and teachings. He spoke of the birds of the air, sheep to green pastures, flowers in the fields, vine and branches..... only good trees bearing good fruits..... etc. etc.

Once Jesus said: "Unless the seed falls down and buries in the ground, and dies, it will not produce a New Plant, New Life....." He bore witness to these teachings in his own life, death and resurrection. And today

we celebrate this event as Easter! – (John 20: 1 – 9)

## NEW LIFE OF JESUS

Let us now reflect on Jesus' new life after resurrection. The effects and the impact on his transformation to a new life were unique, distinct and powerful. The apostles and the other disciples who were the first witnesses of his resurrection were also suddenly transformed – changed from a band of frightful men into a brigade of daring witnesses and missionaries, to ambassadors of Christ's mission. Wherever they went, they preached the good news of Christ's resurrection boldly. The power of the resurrection began to work on the lives of people. Their sorrow began to give way to joy; despair began to give way to hope and darkness gave way to light.

A few years back, a young university girl who came to 'Subodhi Youth Centre' – Piliyandala, shared with me such an Easter experience of her life. She had joined the university and boarded in a hostel close by. She had a disastrous first semester. As a fresher, she had to undergo severe ragging. She experienced isolation and loneliness and was frustrated and confused. She went home at Payagala, for two weeks in April for New Year and Easter vacation.

On that Easter Sunday, after attending the morning mass, she went straight to the beach, sea shore close by, alone by herself and leaning on to a boat, she spent hours and hours.

**Every time we are overwhelmed by problems, discouraged by disappointments, we are diminished and deterred in some way. But if we believe in the real power and the presence of the Risen Jesus Christ among us, we will find that impossible becomes possible and unreachable becomes reachable.**



**The Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

She shared her experience with me this way; "I watched the waves roll up and beat on the sand and pass one by one before my eyes. As I was gazing at them, slowly my disastrous first year experience passed before my eyes. All of a sudden, my whole experience fell into place.

The sun has come up brightly. It was over and it was the past. I could forget it forever. Now, all my goals, enthusiasm, future plans came back rushing, stronger than ever. I rose with determination, came out and went home in peace. I am made new. After the Easter vacation, I returned to the university confident and relaxed. I completed the second part of the academic year successfully."

Well, she had died to her past and risen to a new life. She had experienced Easter and the power of resurrection in a very personal manner.

## JESUS AFTER RESURRECTION

Jesus is risen. How do we explain and understand Jesus Christ after resurrection? Does he now a different person? Or is he the

same Jesus? Jesus has risen. God has raised him up to a radically new form of life – a richer and a higher level of life, an everlasting life. The earlier earthly life was perishable. A perishable flesh now transfigured like at the time of 'Transfiguration at Mount Tabor,' radiant with glory and power, splendour and majesty of divinity. It is the same Jesus, but a new manner of living and existence – spiritual and higher level of existence. As the seed dies and new life is born in a plant or as a shattered and broken egg, brings a new life in a chicken. St. Paul says, "What is sown is perishable, what is raised up is imperishable." That is why the angels in Luke's gospel say, "Do not look for the living among the dead. He is not here. He has risen to a new life." (Luke 24: 1-12)

## THE LORD IS RISEN FOR YOU AND FOR ME

Through baptism we already share in the risen life of Jesus promised by the message of Easter. "If we die with him, we rise with him as He is the life and resurrection."

We experience a new life of risen Christ, when we are able to climb up and pull through our 'personal Calvaries', such as frustrations, depressions, emotional imbalances, broken love relationships, failures in life, because we trusted in the risen Lord.

Every time we are overwhelmed by problems, discouraged by disappointments, we are diminished and deterred in some way. But if we believe in the real power and the presence of the risen Jesus Christ among us, we will find that impossible becomes possible and unreachable becomes reachable.

We experience a new life of the risen Lord, when we are forgiven by God for our sins and reconciled with him and in turn we forgive others. St. Peter had such an experience. He denied his master, but the joy of being forgiven, surged within himself so much so; he three times asserted his love for the man he had three times denied.

Do you remember the first words of Jesus to his disciples the few times as he appeared? They were, "Fear not. Do not be afraid. I am with you."

Late Pope John Paul II, gave us an example of courageous living and courageous dying. In his old days with many ailments and sufferings; he often used these reassuring words of Jesus, "Fear not," during his last days on earth. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ should change the way we live our ordinary life, and day-to-day living. Let us keep our risen Lord always in our hearts and mind and live a courageous and committed Christian life for Him and with Him, who is always powerfully present with us and in us.