

Week 30

## Jesus Is Risen

**Guide: Joy**



We knew from the beginning that God's victory over sin and death was complete. Now we come to know it through the experience of new life given to Jesus. For months now we have been given the grace to become intimate friends with Jesus, who has shown us his life and who he is for us. Now we simply pray to experience *joy with Jesus* in the gift of risen life he enjoys.

Jesus really died and his dead body was laid to rest in a tomb. *The tomb is empty!* It is forever a symbol of God's power to liberate—to set us free from the power of sin and death.

*Jesus is alive!* And he is forever alive, with a life beyond our imagining. For the next several weeks, we want to enter into a taste of that new life. For in celebrating his liberation with Jesus, we grow in anticipation of the way that has been opened for this new life for us.

This week we contemplate, using the Scriptures and our imagination, the experience *for Jesus* of being raised from the dead and his sharing of that experience with those he loved. What inexpressible joy Jesus must have had at experiencing eternal life as a human being! Having just experienced the depths of our

suffering and death, he now knows what it will be for us to experience the life of the Resurrection.

And how he must have delighted in sharing that joy with those who suffered with him at the foot of the cross! We can only imagine what joy filled the heart of Mary, his mother, when she saw him alive. Who could have experienced *joy with Jesus* more completely?

Finally, we contemplate our risen Lord sharing his joy with us. Alive forever, and able to be with us at every moment, he still has holes in his hands and a gaping wound in his side. He still is the person whose life we have contemplated for months. The past and the present come together for us in this encounter with Jesus, risen.

All week, we will try to let ourselves walk around in the sense of Jesus, alive and with us. The more we let Jesus be alive and present in every event of our daily life, the more completely his resurrection confronts the fear, doubt, lack of courage, lack of hope, we might experience.

Use the resources here to get started and enter the movements of the week more deeply. Our awareness of Jesus' standing with us in the most mundane and ordinary moments of our days will breathe the life of his Spirit into our hearts. And we will indeed share his joy.

## **Some Practical Help for Getting Started This Week**

We use the same practical way of proceeding in this week as we have throughout the retreat.

### **The Mystery We Contemplate**

Here it is *Jesus alive*, enjoying God's victory over all that threatens to hold us captive.

### **The Grace We Ask For**

Here it is to seek *joy with Jesus*. This week has perhaps the least amount of self. We want our joy with the one we love to be complete. It is the most profound way to enter into how his risen life transforms my life.

### **Our Daily Life Contemplation**

This week we want to imagine those encounters between Jesus and his closest disciples and friends. Those who grieved with him at the cross are given the first gift of faith in God's power over death. We begin by imagining his showing himself alive to Mary his mother. We move during the week to his showing himself fully alive to us personally.

### **The Daily Means**

Each morning, among the first things to do is to pause to focus on the grace we desire this week. As we move through the various commitments of the day, let us stay conscious of a lighter spirit within us, more deeply aware that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Try, at several checkpoints in the day, to ask whether your spirit is that of one whose best friend has just been raised to life. In the various background moments of the day, keep telling yourself, "The tomb is empty," or "Jesus is alive forever," or "I will not give my peace away," or "I want to live my life in this world, with my heart set on the world that will never end, with Jesus." As we encounter those situations of sin or darkness or death itself, which we looked at last week, let them be fully bathed in the light of Jesus' resurrection. If we're faithful to this pattern each day, we should be able to recognize results in people's saying to us, "You seem different today—lighter, happier, freer somehow." By praying in everyday life this way, the worries don't disappear; rather, we can rely on a faith that frees us from their devastating effects on our spirit.

Each night find a brief moment to bring the day together in gratitude. When the morning grace we desire and some concrete event in our day's busyness come together, we need to recognize that as gift and give thanks. This ritual each evening increases our expectation the following day to find the joy of the Resurrection there. Make use of the various resources provided for this week: the "For the Journey," "Scripture Readings," and sample words for our attempts at expression, in "In These or Similar Words . . ."

We may have begun this week with a low-grade sense of discouragement—"I don't know where they've taken him." By God's grace, we can end this week with a felt joy in the experience of Jesus alive, and a new courage as he says to us, "I am with you always."

## **For the Journey: The Garden of Resurrection**

We pray this week with the joy of promises kept. Ignatius invites those who have made decisions to follow Christ to experience the grace of Christ's resurrection. We have considered the consequences of being faithful to being his companions. We have heard him telling the early companions that the world

will hate them as it hates him. We have been invited to be in the world but not of it. He has prayed that we not be taken from the world but be a blessing within and about the world.

Mary, who stood at the foot of the cross, is the first to have promises kept to her. Ignatius piously pictures Jesus as appearing to his mother first after being raised from his tomb. As we earlier watched her fretfully consider the visit of the angel of the Annunciation, we now watch a most intimate embrace of mother and Son. As we watched and listened to Mary and Joseph's finding Jesus in the temple, we now joyfully watch and listen to Jesus finding Mary in her grief. We stood with Mary as they took Jesus down from the cross and laid him in a tomb; we gratefully consider Jesus comforting his faithful mother and companions as she experiences her own resurrection in that of her Son. We may stay with that prayer view a long time and consider how Jesus has been released from his tomb to untomb us; as he has comforted his mother, he desires to comfort us.

There stood with Mary at the cross Mary Magdalene. In John's account of Jesus' rising, he first appears to this other woman of faith. It takes place in a garden and she supposes he is the gardener. So we visit the third garden of salvation. The garden of disobedience, where creation refused to listen; the garden of obedience, where the second Adam struggled and was faithful. Now we meet in the garden of resurrection.

The Gardener begins his graceful tending to the vines he has planted. He gently cultivates his branches after having pruned them all. Ignatius would have us be there and hear the Gardener mention our names, as he does here, "Mary." We are watching intimacy at work, comforting, raising up other bodies and spirits. We want to linger here watching the Gardener embrace his world.

In this scene, as with all the other contemplations during these weeks of the Resurrection, we see Jesus, because he is the Christ, urging whomever he meets back to, or out to, his mission of tending the garden. "Do not cling to me, but go . . ." Always intimacy moves to fruitfulness. The joy of his resurrection is that the love of God is not confined to a tomb but intensified in the lives of his found ones. The Humpty-Dumpty world is beginning to be put back together again by the risen Christ and his risen followers.

## **In These or Similar Words . . .**

Dear Jesus,

Can it be real? Is this really you standing here in front of me? I watched from the foot of the cross as you suffered so incredibly and now, here you are in the garden, calling my name! Yes, Jesus, I am here with you! You are here! You are alive!

We hug and laugh and say nothing intelligible—just sounds of joy and awe. You are alive! I stop for a minute, thinking I am dreaming, but then I look into your eyes. Oh, my dear, dear friend, you have been raised from the dead. I will have you in my life!

There was such a loss when I saw you die but now, standing in this garden, you put your hands on my shoulder and look into my eyes again. We will not be apart anymore. "I will be with you always," you say to me and from deep in my heart, I can feel it.

Yes, you will be with me. I will stay with you. Together, Jesus, we will always be together! You are alive. You are here and then you hug me so gently and tell me you will see me later. There is no pang as you leave, no fear that you will not return. I feel your life so deeply within me in an odd, vivid way.

It's joy and energy and a whole new way of being, of living, and of seeing the world. You are alive, my Jesus! Thank you for being in my life in such a deep way. Thank you for *being* my life.

### **Scripture Readings**

Matthew 28:1–20

Luke 24:1–12

John 20:1–29