

Sermon John 20 1 18 Palm Sunday /Easter

Sermon: Palm Sunday/ Easter (PPS)

Text: John 20:1-18 (v.1): “Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.”

Theme: Easter Symbols X Reality

Goal: To relate the Easter symbols to the resurrection of Jesus to not lose the main focus of our hope.

Dear Friends in the Resurrected Christ,

Introduction: When we were preparing the Easter Tree, Zenka asked me: What do the eggs have to do with Christ in Easter? - It is a very good question! For some people, the symbols and traditions are more important than the truth: Christ is alive!

The eggs are a symbol of new life. An egg by itself looks like a stone, or like a lifeless object. We break eggs and eat them, like we eat carrots, or beans. - What is the difference? Under special conditions, from the egg we can have a chick! The “stone”, the shell, breaks and a chick comes from inside! A new life appears ... like when the tomb of Jesus was opened and He appeared resurrected, in a new life!

The butterfly is a symbol of Easter as well. The ugly caterpillar rolls itself in a cocoon and after some time a beautiful butterfly appears! What a change! A new, colorful life is there!

The rabbits are symbols of Easter too! They are among the first animals that appear at the end of the winter and at the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. And Easter is in springtime there! After the harsh winter time, new life comes out.

The same happens to the lilies, the first flowers that appear at spring. The bulb in the soil produces a colorful flower, showing that there is life and hope.

Can we Christians use these symbols? Of course we can, but never forget their real meaning and purpose: To point to the new life that Jesus brought with His resurrection.

The empty tomb and the empty cross are the best images to remind us for the resurrected Jesus and the new life He promises for us all as well.

Easter is the first festival that the Christian Church celebrated, even before Christmas and Pentecost were remembered as Church Festivals. The message of the living Christ brought new hope to the disciples and to the women, to the first followers of Jesus. After the big sorrow and deception on Good Friday, they couldn't believe that Jesus was alive again, as the women testified. But after they had seen Him, they couldn't stop to tell everyone that Jesus was alive and that He was the promised Savior of the world. Only through Him we have forgiveness of sin and a reconciled God, whom we can call as Our Father who art in heaven!

The resurrection of Jesus and all the Easter symbols and celebrations show us that there is life and hope after death. Death is not the final dot at the end of our life, but it is a semicolon. It is just a pause to begin a new sentence in the presence of God in the hope of our resurrection on the last day.

As we are gathered as Christians to this special celebration, let us rejoice in the hope Jesus gives us, telling our children the truth, which is beyond the symbols: the eggs, the rabbit... Jesus loves the children and He doesn't want to see them deceived by the adults. Since their baptism they are born again for Jesus and they are growing in their faith as they learn about Jesus at home and in the Sunday School.

In this Feast of Life, let us rejoice in the resurrected Christ with our family and friends. Happy Easter! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town, 17.04.2011