



St. John writes in his Gospel: “There is no greater love than that one would lay down their life for another.” In this one line we are given the opportunity to experience the joy and the power of Easter every day of our lives. There is no meaning for us in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus if we are not willing to change the way in which we understand it. The Resurrection can never be understood or experienced unless we allow the living Spirit of Jesus to share our lives and seek to recognize Him in ourselves and in others.

Jesus showed His love for us in very real ways. In the hymn to the Philippians we hear: *“Although He was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of humanity. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!”* Jesus himself has told us: *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”* The fullness of our Resurrection will be when we pass from earthly existence to eternal life, but we have the ability and the opportunity to experience resurrection often on our life’s journey.

To lay down our life does not just mean to die a “physical death”. We can die to selfish pride for the sake of another, and we rise to a new understanding of who we are. We can die to selfishness, and we rise to appreciate more what we have. We can die to prejudice, and we rise to accept others without fear. We can die to self-righteousness, and we rise to experience the meaning of true humility. We can die to self-pity, and rise to experience the power and presence of God with us. We can die to indifference, and rise to be more aware of the suffering in our world. We can die to our unwillingness to see and experience the joy of life, and we rise to know that there is nothing that can weigh us down unless we give it the power to do so.

Yes, the tomb is empty! We cannot look for Jesus among the dead because that is not where he dwells. Our God is a living God, and He dwells in each one of us, yet we fail and oftentimes refuse to recognize Him. Jesus dwells in you and me. He is the image of God in which we were all created. To refuse to seem Him in each other is to deny who you truly are: a child of God.

May this Easter raise you up from all that has prevented you from recognizing the loving and healing presence of Jesus in your lives and in those that you encounter? May you see resurrection in everything and in every place; the bleakness of winter that gives way to the new life of spring, the darkness of nightfall that gives way for the light of a new day, the trials and temptations of life that are no more than an opportunity to experience the dying of one way of life to rise to a new awareness of God’s love for you, and finally the realization that when we leave this world, it is but a passage....we die to our humanity that we might finally reach the full potential of who we really are: God’s children; and our true home is not here, it is but a stop on our journey to perfect love. We are destined for greatness, we are meant to live a life we cannot humanly comprehend but will experience...we will live forever in our Father’s love! We are merely spiritual beings on an earthy journey.

**Let us pray:** Lord, you have already raised us to the new life of Easter! Praise and thanksgiving for this wonderful gift! Help me to stop looking for you among the dead; for you live and walk among us, you are the LIVING God. Let me recognize You in myself so that I may see you in all I meet. Lord, you have given your all for me, and you continue to do so, may I too, give everything I am to you, so in turn I can be your hands and heart to all I encounter. May I minister to those in need knowing that it is you who work through me, and it is I who am your instrument? Amen