



Zurich. The Passiontide, with the death of the Lord on Good Friday, ends magnificently in the resurrection of the Lord. This is the fundamental belief of all Christians. But why is this day of the resurrection so important for us?

Taking all the various gospels together, the Bible relates that it was still very early on this first day of the week. The tomb into which the body of Jesus had been laid had been under careful watch from Good Friday, all through the Sabbath, and right up to this very morning. Some women, Mary of Magdala and others, made their way to the cave that served as His tomb.

### **The day of the resurrection**

When they arrived there, the tomb was already open. The large stone that had blocked the entrance had been rolled aside. An angel spoke to the women, saying, "Do not be afraid! I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said." Quickly they ran back to tell the Apostles the news. But they refused to believe them at first. On the contrary, they thought their words were nothing more than idle tales!

Nevertheless, Peter and John decided that they wanted to go see for themselves, and hurried to the tomb. And indeed: Jesus was not there. The tomb was empty. Holy Scripture states: "For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead."

### **The time it takes to understand**

It takes time to fathom the unthinkable and unfamiliar. It needs to develop slowly and first become an inner truth. When Jesus, the Risen One, repeatedly showed Himself to them and spoke to them, their faith began to grow. More than ever before, they followed their Master, and even died for Him. The account of the two disciples who made their way to Emmaus in sadness and despair speaks volumes:

They were discussing the unbelievable events of the past days. The Lord joined them on the road, but they did not recognize Him at first. They told Him of the events that had transpired on Good Friday, as well as of the news of the women. Their unknown companion explained all the interconnections to them by citing Moses and the Prophets. That evening they sit together at the same table—and only then do they recognize Him. Equipped with new courage, the two disciples make their way back to Jerusalem. Filled with joy, they tell the other Apostles—who had locked themselves into a room for fear of the Jews—of their experience. Here follows the most wonderful sentence in the gospel: "The Lord is risen indeed!"

### **The heart of the gospel**

To this day, people have difficulty believing in the resurrection of the Lord. Already very early on at the start of the Christian church, for instance in the congregation of Corinth, doubts began to arise. Paul writes exhaustively on the subject of the resurrection. He says that without the resurrection, the entire Christian faith would be meaningless. "However," he concludes, "because Christ is risen, those who belong to Him will also be able to resurrect!" Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ constitutes the foundation of our faith and is the very heart of the gospel.

As concerns the New Apostolic faith, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider explained as follows in a divine service in Torgau:

- We believe in God, the Father—we trust Him—He is the Almighty.
- We believe in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer—He has come in order to grant mankind eternal life.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Helper—He reveals everything that we need for our salvation.
- We believe in the church of Christ—the Lord watches over His church so that it can make salvation accessible to human beings.
- We believe in the apostolate—the Lord rules His church and, to this end, sends His Apostles so that they may continue to work until the return of the Lord.
- We believe in the sacraments—namely Holy Baptism with water, Holy Communion, and Holy Sealing. We believe in the return of Christ—the Lord will come to take unto Himself those who have waited for Him and have allowed themselves to be prepared.

### The Apostolic Creed

Together with other denominations the New Apostolic Church professes the "Apostolic Creed", which was formulated in the early Christian era on the basis of Apostle Peter's sermon in the house of Cornelius:

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal [catholic] church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

5 April 2015