

# 'He has been raised!'



A Message from  
**BISHOP DAVID M.  
O'CONNELL, C.M.**

Jesus of Nazareth lived most of his life in obscurity without much notoriety or attention paid to him. The Gospels tell us about his birth in Bethlehem and, later, about his appearance in the temple at age 12. Other than that, the Gospels are largely silent about Jesus of Nazareth until he appears before John the Baptist in the Jordan and begins his public ministry around age 30.

Those hidden years of Jesus' life leave everything to the imagination and to speculation. And while that is true of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus of history, it is not true of Jesus the Messiah, the Christ of faith.

A thousand years or more of Old Testament writings and traditions kept the Messiah before the Jewish people's minds and in their hopes and expectations before the "Word became flesh and dwelt among us." They are not two different persons, no. They are one and the same. Jesus the Messiah, the Christ of faith is eternal but chose to live in a specific, identifiable, historic time period, hence the title, "Jesus of history."

It is the New Testament, especially the Gospels, that connect all that was planned and foretold about the Messiah with Jesus of Nazareth. And the events of Holy Week have made that abundantly clear.

The week began with Jesus' tri-

umphant entrance into Jerusalem and continued with his celebration of Passover with the Twelve Apostles. The week ended with his brutal crucifixion and death. The Church's liturgies for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday painted the picture in a most dramatic way and led us to Jesus' tomb.

Although Jesus was an "unknown" for most of his life, he certainly attracted enough attention in his last three years of his earthly existence to lift people's hopes that the Messiah had come, and the Messiah was he! But when he died in a most humiliating way, the hopes of his followers that he was the Messiah were dashed ... But that was not the end of the story, as we know.

John's Gospel tells us that when the women came to the tomb in which Jesus was buried, the stone was already rolled back; his body was not there; the tomb was empty. "He has been raised; he is not here" they were told by the angel. Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of faith, the Messiah – everything that had been said and predicted about him had been fulfilled, had come true.

The Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. That is what we Christians celebrate at Easter and that is what joins us with baptized Catholics throughout the world.

For all of us who believe in the Lord

Jesus Christ, Easter is the heart of our faith – its life, its breath, its everything. There is no more significant human expression than faith in Jesus' Resurrection. He didn't just die and come back to life. He was not revived or resuscitated. Jesus' Resurrection is about new life, transformed life, a completely different order of existence. He rose from the dead leaving death behind him. The tomb is empty. This is about glory and triumph.

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"Christ once raised from the dead shall never die again; death has no more power over him." And the source of our Easter joy is that he offers the same triumph and glory to us who believe in him. That is the meaning of our Baptism when we say we die in Christ only to rise in him, new, changed, different, filled with grace and light and life.

Easter is that moment in human history when the world was changed forever: changed by an obscure Jesus of Nazareth who lived and died but who rose to new life, Jesus Christ the Messiah of God, the Christ of our faith! Amen! *Alleluia! Happy Easter!*