

Chapter 1: Jesus Is Always with Us



Introduction

Do you remember celebrating Christmas? You may remember that Christmas is the day that Jesus was born. God gave his Son, Jesus, to us to save us and to lead us back to him. When Jesus lived on the earth with us, people could hear what he said and see what he did through his words and actions. What a wonderful gift God the Father gave us!

Do you remember celebrating Easter? At Easter, we celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead for us and lives with us forever. We no longer see Jesus as he walked on the earth, but he still gives his life to us. He gives his life to us now through the Sacraments. Through the Sacraments, Jesus is with us always.

Scripture Story: Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

In this Scripture passage, we find out what happened when Jesus rose from the dead. He met his friend Mary. Let's read together:

Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked her.

She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"

Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. . . .

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

(John 20:11-14, 16)

Look at the title of the story. Do you know what "Risen Jesus" means? It means that Jesus was crucified on the cross but rose from the dead to live forever.

Who was Mary Magdalene? She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his tomb, or grave. She was crying because she did not know where Jesus was. But when Mary Magdalene turned around, she saw Jesus! Later Jesus would appear to his other followers.

This is the story of the very first Easter Sunday, when Jesus rose from the dead. Each year at Easter, we celebrate that the Risen Jesus is with us today. One special way he is with us is in the Seven Sacraments.

Jesus Gave Us the Sacraments

Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love. These signs are called Sacraments. Jesus is present to us in a special way in the Sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. The Sacraments give us grace, the gift of God's life in us. Grace makes us God's children and helps us do good things. We can be sure that when we receive the Sacraments with faith, they will accomplish what they signify. That is, they will do in us what the words and actions of the Sacraments say they will do. They will help us to be faithful followers of Jesus.

Grace also helps us to stay away from sin. A sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.

The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church and are called the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Do you know the date of your Baptism? Ask your parents to tell you.

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

In Baptism we become children of God and start a new life with God. All of our sins are washed away. If we sin after we are baptized, our new life with God is weakened—or even lost if it is a big sin. That is why we have the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, to forgive the sins we commit after we are baptized.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation has many names:

- Its official Church name is the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to "the Sacrament of Penance" or "the Sacrament of Reconciliation."
- We often call this Sacrament **confession**, because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, "We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon."
- Sometimes it is called the Sacrament of **conversion**, because this Sacrament helps us to *convert*, or change, for the better.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask God to forgive us. After we confess our sins and are forgiven, our new life with God will be strengthened if it had been weakened or restored if it had been lost.

Things to Remember

- Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
- We meet Jesus in the Sacraments.
- The new life with God that we receive in Baptism is weakened by our sins or even lost if it is a big sin.
- We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.