

## Why is Easter so important? - Children's Liturgy of the Word

The two biggest days of the year for the Catholic Church are Christmas and Easter. Of course, on Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus. What's so special about Easter? Jesus rose from the dead on Easter. Now, of course, if there never had been a Christmas, that is, if Jesus had never been born, there would obviously never have been an Easter. That's because you cannot raise from the dead unless you had died first, and of course, you cannot die unless you are born first. But even though Easter could only happen if there had been a Christmas first, **Easter** is the main reason Jesus is different from all the other people who ever lived. Easter is really why we are Christians. If Jesus had been born and then just died, he'd be like all other people in history who have lived and died, which is pretty much everyone.

But Jesus is a **special** person because of what? He is the Son of God. Remember, God the Father, God **the Son**, & God the Holy Spirit. And while it is special—I mean we're talking greatest-show-on-earth kind of stuff here—**real special**, to be crucified and then raise from the dead, He is God, come down to earth to die for **our** sins. That's why Jesus walked this earth, to suffer and die for us, each one of us, for me & for you & for you & for you & you & you & you & you...I think you get what I mean.

In the Jewish religion the way it was when Jesus walked the earth, the people would bring animals to the priests—doves and sheep and goats and calves. The priests would then kill the animals, sacrificing them to God for the forgiveness of sins. But none of the animals ever came back from being sacrificed. And the priests kept sacrificing animals over and over again. However, Jesus gave up His body as a one-time sacrifice for all of our sins, because He is God. As God, why would He want to become a man, who can hurt like a man and die like a man? Because He loves us. He even went to hell, just like it says in the Apostles Creed, just like everyone did when they died before Jesus died. Not the hell which we think of as punishment for being evil on earth, but the hell which is separation from God. Because of our sinfulness, because we are imperfect beings, because we are sinners, we cannot achieve everlasting life with God by ourselves. But once Jesus died for our sins, once He descended into hell, He conquered death and rose back to life. He paved the way for all of us to have everlasting life after we die. He voluntarily came to earth, suffered, died, and went to Hell and back, for **us**, because **He loves us**. **That's** why Easter is the most important day of the year. **That's** why He is our Savior, because He gave up His life to save us from an eternity of separation from God. Eternity means forever. He saved us from separation from God **forever**.

How special is that! Not special like wow-ee, look at that, He-rose-from-the-dead-pretty-amazing-stuff special. But how special **are we** to God! How much love does God have for us that He would do all that for **each of us**! Like St. John says in his gospel, "God so loved us that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Do you get it? Do you understand? Are you excited? You don't look excited. It doesn't matter whether you are stuck at home because of this virus pandemic, or if you could have been at church on this very special day, like we all should want to be, **that's** why Easter is so important: Jesus died for us to save us, because He loves us.

Happy Easter to all of you and your families. And STAY HEALTHY!!

Joseph Calderone

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