

It should be a consolation to us that the first response of the apostles to Jesus' resurrection was disbelief. The women come, bringing the news that Jesus has been raised from the dead, and the apostles didn't believe. Disbelief by the apostles should be an encouragement to us because believing in Jesus' resurrection isn't easy. We are asked to believe that a man, dead and buried, was raised up by God's power to new life. We are called to believe that resurrection took place in bodily form. Jesus' body was transformed but it was still a body. It could still eat and be touched. So, the challenge to believe in resurrection- it asks us to believe something that's outside our experience. In the world we live, those who are dead don't rise and appear to us in glorious bodies. Yet, every Easter, we are asked to believe it. Every time we gather to worship, our words and actions proclaim that we believe it. Two questions: Why is believing in Jesus' resurrection so important and how can we believe something which is outside of our experience?

Believing in Jesus' resurrection is important because its larger than a miracle which happened to him. We don't simply believe Jesus rose from the dead, we also believe that his resurrection is a sign that God has begun to transform the world. If God raised Jesus from the dead, it means that God is serious about destroying evil and establishing the kingdom. That kingdom will not be completed until Jesus returns, **but Easter says it has irrevocably begun**. What we believe at Easter isn't something about Jesus and what happened to him but about God and what God is doing. When we say, "Christ is Risen," we believe that God is destroying evil and establishing a kingdom of justice, love, and peace. Unfortunately, it doesn't make it easier to believe. When we look at the world around us, we can find plenty of evidence that the kingdom of God is not yet here.

So that leads us to the second question: How can we believe in something that's so difficult? How can we, with so much evidence against it, believe that God is establishing a kingdom of justice, love and peace? Here's where the words of the two men in the gospel are important- "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" If we're going to believe the truth of Easter, we must look among the living. We must look at our own lives. We must try to find signs that the kingdom is being established, signs that God is at work and that Jesus' resurrection is real. What might those signs be? Other people who believe. Every time we meet another person who says, I believe in Jesus' resurrection, I believe that God is changing the world, Easter becomes more possible. This is why the Church bases the celebration of Easter around those to be baptized. Their choice to accept Christ makes our belief in Christ more real. All the people in our lives who believe, help us to believe. Each of us can locate in our lives other signs that point to Easter: a faithful spouse whose love we could never merit, a beautiful son or daughter, a danger from which we escaped, a sickness or addiction that should have finished us off but didn't, a moment of peace in the midst of grieving, the ability to hope on the verge of despair. Any of these moments of grace can be a sign that points to the truth of Easter. **None of these signs prove Jesus' resurrection for Easter can't be proven**. But it's only by claiming the signs that we find among the living, that we will ever believe that Jesus was truly raised from the dead. On this Easter morning, let's sing our Alleluias, realizing that some would consider them nonsense. But for those of us who claim God's grace in our lives, they can be light in the darkness, life in the shadow of death, and a shout of joy which proclaims that Christ is risen and that I(We) believe God is transforming the world.