

How Many Resurrections?

How many resurrections have you experienced in your life? This is a question much deeper than the number of Easter Sundays you have celebrated and it speaks directly to this life rather than the Last Judgment. If we are content to cast the word, “resurrection,” in its narrower sense then it means only to rise to life after death; but, if we are willing to think beyond narrow parameters, then the word, “resurrection,” takes on a whole new perspective. Do you think that Jesus intended the narrow sense of the word when he said, “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit?” (*John 12:24*) Biblical scholars and theologians from our catholic Traditions do not think so. They have continued to speak of resurrected life in terms of reformation.

So often we think the word “reformation” only refers to an event that occurred in the sixteenth century. Reformation is not a past event, but rather, a continuing process in which the followers of Jesus Christ conform over and again to the Paschal pattern of Christ’s dying and rising. The Apostle Paul certainly believed that resurrected life is a process of becoming and not something static. He wrote, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-- what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (*Romans 12:2*) He reminded the Ephesians and us that, “we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” (*Ephesians 4:15&23*)

How many resurrections must you and I experience in our lives, in the life of the broader Church, and in the life of St. Martin’s Church? If we are being called to conform our lives, that is our personal lives and the life of our parish community, over and again to the Paschal pattern of Christ’s dying and rising, then it is a continual process. It is a reformation, “re-forming,” of old ways to new ways, ways that speak the message of Christ to new people hungry for salvation. It is a resurrection from dying to self and patterns that do not produce fruit (*John 12: 24*) to the reforming of self in an ongoing encounter with the living and risen Lord. St. Martin’s Church is continually being called to conform her mind and ways to the mind of the Resurrected Christ.

Father Al Jewson