

## Easter

**“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”** Those words from today’s responsorial psalm could apply to any long-anticipated event in life. Many of our engaged couples request them for their wedding day because they have been planning, many of them over a year, and the day has finally arrived. My great-nephew has been waiting and waiting to see a movie that finally opened. One week into the baseball season, Royals fans rejoice and are glad that our team has finally won two in a row. Catholics fasting during Lent have finally arrived at Easter Day. **“This is the day the Lord has made.”**

The words come from Psalm 118 and celebrate a reversal of fortunes when God has done something wonderful and unexpected. In this case, **“the day the Lord has made”** is not a day that arrives after much anticipation, planning and work, but one that bursts onto the scene unannounced with an impact beyond imagining. That’s how Christians view the resurrection of Christ: God’s wondrous victory over sin and death, a conquest we should have seen coming but did not fully grasp that it would.

The resurrection makes a difference because of the incarnation. In Jesus, God took on human form. This Jesus truly died, and this Jesus rose. These events bring us together today to celebrate **“the day the Lord has made.”**

Yet we have not gathered to remember an event long past, such as the anniversary of the death of a great president or the end of a world war. No, we gather because the rising of Jesus endures. He destroyed the gates of death and opened them for us who believe. Psalm 118 uses two images to describe God’s might and God’s mercy: a right hand and a cornerstone. To describe the power of God over every enemy, the psalm declares, **“The right hand of the Lord has struck with power; the right hand of the Lord is exalted.”** To describe the mercy of God for the powerless, it says, **“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”**

Amid these declarations comes this bold statement: **“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”** But who is saying this? Who is saying **“I shall not die”**? The psalm was written hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, yet it foreshadows something Jesus could have said and did say as he prayed these psalms throughout his life. On his lips these words had greater meaning than they ever had in the past: **“I shall not die, but live.”**

Yet, because **“This is the day the Lord has made,”** Jesus does not say these words alone. You and I, because of our faith in him, you and I on this Easter Day, you and I because we gather not to proclaim that Christ rose in the past but that Christ is risen today, you and I can also declare, **“I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.”**

The difference between the arrival of Easter and waiting for the day of your wedding, the day for the opening of a movie, or the day your favorite baseball puts up a W, is that this day happens new again and again. Every Easter, every Sunday, every sunrise we experience the hope that comes from the message of Psalm 118: **This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”**

Sunday, April 9, 2023