

# Rejoice At His Rising - by Sr. Margaret Dorgan, DCM

---

This reflection appeared first in *The Church World*, the diocesan weekly of Maine.

[<<Hub](#)

© copyright 2004 by S. Margaret Dorgan, DCM

## REJOICE AT HIS RISING

***Let no one grieve at his poverty,  
for the universal kingdom has been revealed.  
Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;  
for forgiveness has risen from the grave.  
Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.  
He has destroyed it by enduring it.***

These lines of St. John Chrysostom speak to us who today inhabit a chapter of human history beset with desolation for untold millions. Death and destruction threaten many lives and we realize how frail we are in the face of so much peril. The opening years of the twenty-first century call out with a loud voice for a Savior, and we who are followers of Jesus Christ know we have one.

The Resurrection of Jesus touches each of us and every aspect of our universe. From the beginning of creation, it was determined that at an appointed time, the Word of God would descend to embrace our mortal nature through a Jewish mother. From that first moment of the Incarnation, whatever transpired in His temporal life moved forward to the triumph of His Rising from the dead. The apostles had been bewildered, as we are too often when our expectations are not fulfilled. But just as Jesus took the apostles, He also takes us far beyond what we could ever hope for.

Death and dying seize upon those we love and upon people who are far off. The images of bereavement can overwhelm us until the Holy Spirit arouses our faith and courage. The Spirit reminds us that Jesus has conquered death, moving by way of His crucifixion to a glory that shines its radiance everywhere. We are a privileged people because we know that death is much more than loss. It is a passage leading us to the wide-open doors of the eternal kingdom which is our destiny.

Jesus' Resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament. It glows like a light through all the chapters, even those which deal with pain and sorrow. The First Epistle of Peter admits, "Now for a little while you may have to suffer the distress of various trials, but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 1:6).

Trials can come upon us with a suddenness that upsets our equilibrium. Throughout the ages, unhappily there have occurred episodes in which the church Christ founded has been rocked with scandal. We are startled, as the Jews often were when some leaders of the chosen people seemed to falter in the role assigned them. Stumbling is part of our mortal path and the Holy Spirit bends over us to lift us up and beckon us forward. David Shipler writes in his recent book, *The Working*

*Poor: Invisible in America* : "To appraise a society, examine its ability to be self-correcting."

Beyond that, we understand how any purification Jesus leads us into shines as well with the power of His Resurrection.

The author of First Peter probably wasn't the fisherman whom Jesus saw with his brother Andrew as He passed along the Sea of Galilee, saying, "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mk 1:16). The epistle with Peter's name has a literary style that would not be common to those who go down to the water to earn their living through the catch of the day. Here on Maine's coast, fisherfolk have an opportunity for an education and a special degree accorded by challenges of shifting winds, tides, and changing currents. They would teach us with metaphors based on storms, fog, and sunlit horizons. First Peter's author often uses civic and legal allusions to convey his message.

He tells us we have "the salvation which the prophets carefully searched out and examined. They prophesied the divine favor that was destined to be yours" (1 Pt 1:10). We rejoice that we live in an era of fulfillment. The text continues: "Become holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct after the likeness of the holy One Who called you. Remember, scripture says, ' Be holy for I am holy'" (1 Pt 1:15, 16).

God calls us to greater holiness whenever we become aware of failure in ourselves or in those we look to for inspiration. "Conduct yourselves reverently during your sojourn in a strange land" (17). This earthly journey is only a prelude to our homecoming when exile is over and we are welcomed by an eternal embrace. Already our Redeemer bestows on us the light of His Rising. Like the apostles, we too have been empowered to "**bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**" (Acts 4:33). As each day dawns, let us ask this Risen One to help us make use of such power.

Sr. Margaret Dorgan, DCM