

Catholic

UPDATE

© 2019 LIGUORI
PUBLICATIONS,
A REDEMPTORIST
MINISTRY.

ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI, MO
63057-9999

800-325-9521
LIGUORI.ORG

PHOTOCOPYING
PROHIBITED.

C1904A

APRIL 2019

Easter Redemption

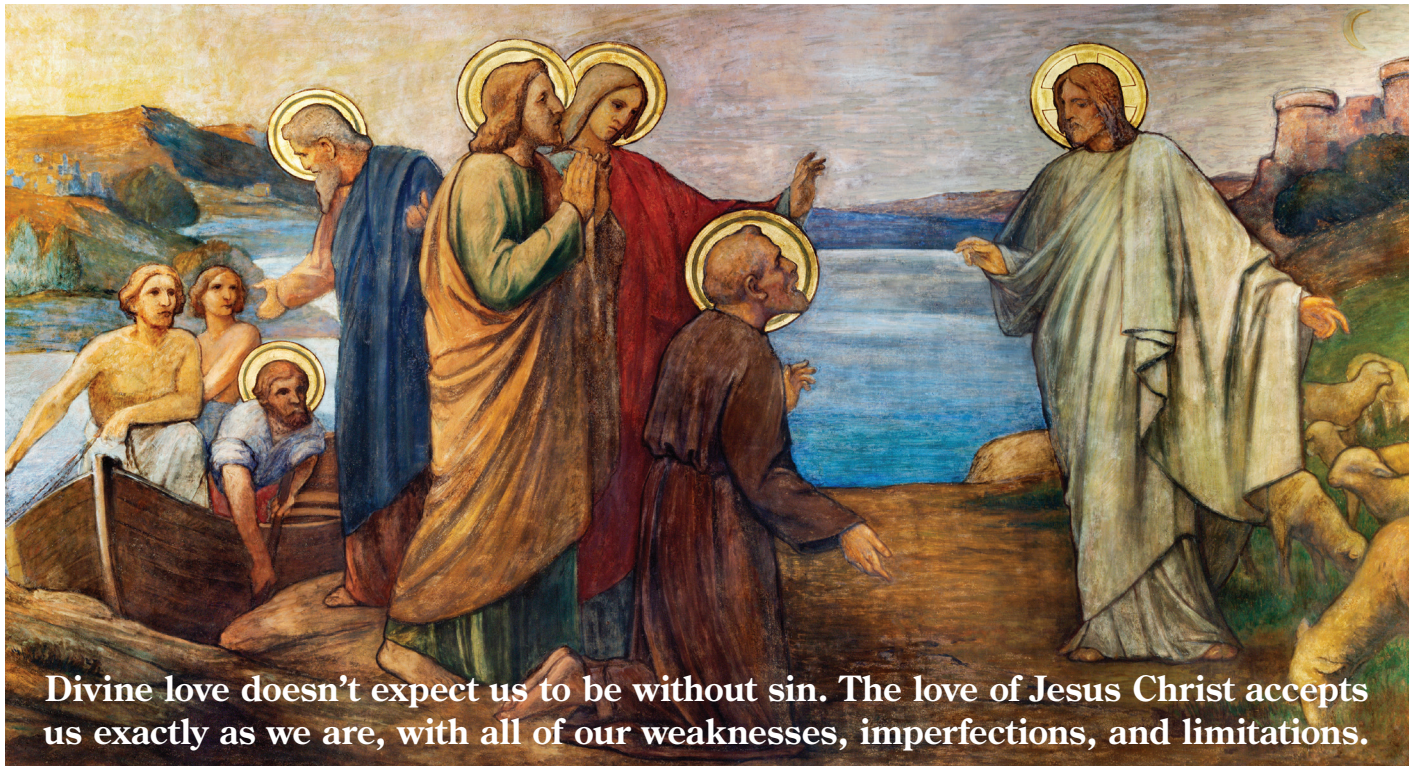
CELEBRATING THE POWER
OF THE RESURRECTION

FR. GREGORY WIEST, CSSR

**Liguori Publications • © 2019 All rights reserved.
Liguori.org • 800-325-9521**

As a child, I remember my aunt asking a priest, who also was a friend of the family, the following questions: "If Jesus was God, why didn't his soul just go to heaven after he died? Why did Jesus have to come back and take on a new body? Why did he have to rise from the dead?"

SHUTTERSTOCK



Divine love doesn't expect us to be without sin. The love of Jesus Christ accepts us exactly as we are, with all of our weaknesses, imperfections, and limitations.

My aunt was absolutely right in one sense: Jesus did not have to rise from the dead. Jesus was God, and after his crucifixion he could have gone to heaven and been alive purely as a spirit, eternal and all-powerful, but he had other plans. In the resurrection, Jesus confirmed his desire to be with us as both God and as a human being. Jesus exists above creation and within it.

If Jesus did not choose to take up his body after his death, distance would still exist between God and us. Now, God not only understands us, he also identifies with us—our reconciliation with God is complete. Our humanness is not a problem to be avoided or denied; it is the doorway to salvation itself. It means God can be found in everything we experience as humans: the evil and the virtuous, the hurtful and the delightful, the shameful and the glorious. We don't need to look outside our lives for love. True love exists in the very depths of our life, because, in this humanness, Jesus came to dwell here.

the legs of the lame, and flooded the ears of the deaf with sound. He also healed people spiritually. He brought peace to disturbed minds and diminished the torment of demons to the hearts of humanity. This power extended into social situations, too. Gathering the outcast, the neglected, and the condemned, he created new communities of acceptance. For Jesus, the earth was meant for the meek. He blessed peacemakers and forbade retaliation. His power and leadership materialized as service to the poor. He uplifted the rejected and gave importance to the lowly of the world.

Liguori Publications • © 2019 All rights reserved.

Liguori.org • 800-325-9521

Exemplifying Restorative Power

Our reasons for being Christian are simple and powerful: We are Christians because the person of Jesus reaches out to us, speaks to us, touches us, reassures us, guides us, and changes us for the better. Our encounter with the living person of Jesus of Nazareth is nothing less than the power of the resurrection itself. Power is a force that makes things happen. The resurrection of Jesus and the redemption we celebrate in the Easter season also exemplify power. Of course, it is quite powerful for a man to die and then come alive again. But the power we refer to throughout this article far exceeds even that astounding reality.

To understand the scope of the power of the resurrection, we must understand Jesus' power here on earth before he died.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus fortified people physically. He restored sight to the eyes of the blind, gave strength to