

The Little White Book

Six-minute reflections
on the Resurrection Narratives
according to Luke

*This book is dedicated to
Bishop Ken Untener
(1937-2004)
who was inspired to create
the Little Books. His life and faith
continue to be their driving force.*

This Easter booklet is based on the writings of Bishop Ken Untener, and put together by Catherine Haven, editor of the *Little Books*, with the help of Sr. Nancy Ayotte, IHM.
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How to Use the *Little White Book*

Six minutes a day.

That's what you're asked to give during these next 50 days of the Easter season.

Each 24-hour day has 240 "six minute" packages. During the Easter season, one of those will be given to the Lord.

The key is the right-hand page. On that page each day (except Sundays) we'll walk through Luke's Resurrection narrative, and then through part of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

The left-hand page is like a buffet table with information about the Easter season, or various traditions and customs, or the lives of saints whose feasts land on that particular day.

Start with either page, as you wish.

All of this provides the framework for you to experience one of our oldest traditions of prayer called "lectio divina" – sacred reading. We take a short Scripture passage and simply let God speak to us through the words, guiding us to reflections that sometimes seem to come from nowhere. But they're not "from nowhere." They're from God.

People are often surprised at how easy it is to pray this way, and how deep such prayer can be.

It can change your day . . . change your life.

On Monday, April 10, we'll begin walking through the Resurrection narrative of Luke.



Ben-Hur

The son of the governor of Indiana, Lew Wallace was born on this day in 1827. He served in the Mexican War, was a lawyer, was elected to the state senate, and was a major general during the Civil War – successfully squashing Jubal Early’s raid on Washington, D.C. in 1864. He also was governor of the New Mexico Territory, and later U.S. minister to Turkey.

Wallace was a prolific writer of military novels, but perhaps he is best known for a novel written as the result of a bet.

One day, Wallace and his friend, atheist Robert Ingersoll, got into a discussion about the divinity of Christ. Ingersoll challenged Wallace to prove that Jesus was the Son of God.

Wallace accepted the challenge. After years of researching in libraries around the world, Wallace (an indifferent Christian) changed his mind about Christianity.

In 1880, Wallace published his novel, “Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ.” By 1889, 400,000 copies had been sold – more than the popular “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” For many years, Ben-Hur was only outsold by the Bible. Wallace’s novel has not been out of print since it was first published.

Lew Wallace died February 15, 1905.

Monday, First Week of Easter

At daybreak on the first day of the week the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (Lk 24:1-3)

One of the most familiar phrases in the Apostles' Creed is: "We believe in the *resurrection* of the body."

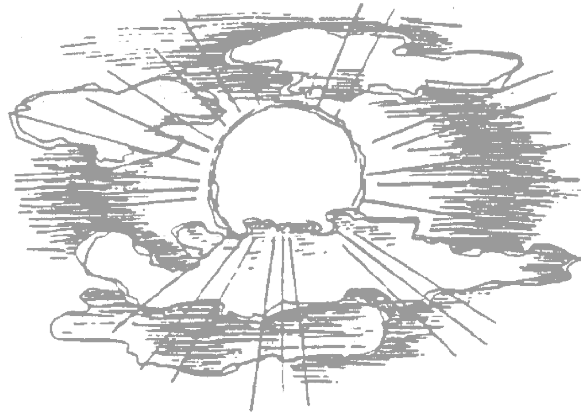
"Resurrection" is not the same as "resuscitation" (the act of reviving from apparent death or unconsciousness). In resurrection, *this* human existence isn't simply continued. It's transformed. *This* human existence, which for some may not have been so good at all, which may have been plagued by mistakes or just bad breaks, *this* human existence is transformed into something magnificent. The seed blossoms into what it was meant to be.

That's why the crucifixion means so much. The body that was put in the tomb was a wreck – broken, beaten, bloody, ruined. But Jesus went through death to a new, transformed, impossible-to-describe human life. On Friday he was a wreck, and on Sunday this broken body was glorious.

"We believe in the resurrection of the body." That's *my* body I'm talking about.



*Spend some quiet time
with the Lord*



Luke's Resurrection narrative

No one knows exactly when Christ's resurrection took place, only that it was sometime between his burial late on Friday and the discovery of the empty tomb early Sunday morning. There were no eyewitnesses to describe the Resurrection itself. Instead, there are descriptions of appearances of the risen Lord *after* the Resurrection.

The account of the Passion is one continuous narrative, very similar in all four Gospels. Not so with the narratives of the Resurrection appearances. These are isolated scenes and, while there are some similarities, each Gospel has its own stories to tell.

Luke's Gospel account can be divided into five episodes, all taking place on Easter Sunday:

- (1) the finding of the empty tomb at dawn,
- (2) the appearance of the risen Christ to two disciples walking to Emmaus,
- (3) the appearance to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem,
- (4) the commissioning of these disciples to witness and preach in his name,
- (5) the end of the visible appearances as Christ is carried off to heaven on Easter Sunday night.

While the women were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. (Lk 24:4-5)

The dazzling garments suggest the other-worldly character of these “two men.” When the two disciples on the way to Emmaus later talk about this incident, they will say that the women reported that they had seen “a vision of *angels*.”

At the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, an angel explained to shepherds about the birth at Bethlehem.

Now, at the end of Luke’s Gospel, angels will explain to these women what happened at Calvary. What happened there was also a birth.

The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem brought joy. His terrible death at Calvary – to everyone’s surprise – also brought joy.

God seemed absent during the crucifixion, but God was very much present. Through it God brought about a new day, a new time in history, an unprecedented continuing presence of the Spirit on this earth.

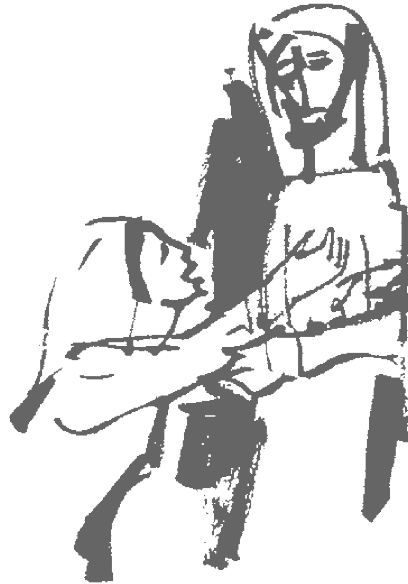
Through the Resurrection and sending of the Spirit, God is present and active in our world in a new way.

God is present and active in my life now, and will be all day. Today, what I need to do is turn off the “mute button” so that I can hear the Lord.

Like right now.



*Spend some quiet time
with the Lord*



Apostle to the apostles

On the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee are the ruins of a small town called Magdala. It produced the woman who, next to the mother of Jesus, is the most famous woman in the Gospels. Except for one brief mention in Luke's Gospel when he lists some of the women disciples, Mary Magdalene does not appear in any of the Gospels until the crucifixion.

All four Gospels place her at the cross on Good Friday, and also at the empty tomb on Easter morning. Of even more significance, in Mark and John, the risen Lord appears to her before anyone else – even before Peter.

The feast of Mary Magdalene is celebrated on July 22, where she is listed as: “Mary Magdalene, Disciple of the Lord.”

The men said to the women, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised.” (Lk 24:5-6)

The message of the angels is clear: Jesus is “the living one.”

Jesus didn’t come to have a deadening effect upon the world, or upon anything. He came to bring life – God’s life. This life isn’t something that switches on after I die. It pulses within me now. Paul put it clearly:

*If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit **that dwells in you**. (Rom 8:11)*

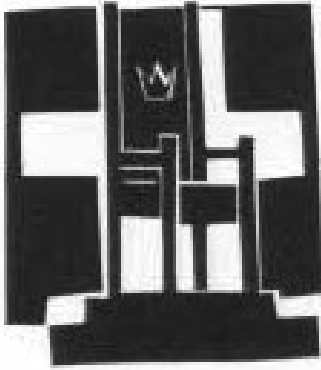
The Christian way of life has its challenges, but it is never meant to be dull, listless, blank, stale, flat. That’s something worth remembering, especially on a bad day.

God’s life – God’s own life – is pulsing within me through the Holy Spirit.

Now. This very moment.



*Spend some quiet time
with the Lord*



Catherine de' Medici

Catherine de' Medici was a convent-educated orphan who went on to become wife of a king, queen of France, and the mother of three kings. Her great-uncle was Pope Leo X.

Born on this date in 1519 in Florence, Italy, Catherine was orphaned at one month old, and placed under the guardianship of her uncle, the ambitious Cardinal Giulio de' Medici. Later, when he had become Pope Clement VII, he arranged a marriage for her with the future Henry II of France to fortify his political influence. Catherine was only 14.

For most of her married life, Catherine played a quiet, non-assuming role in politics. But after her husband's and then her eldest son's death, she became regent for her son, Charles IX, who was too young to rule. Catherine began to assert her political influence, particularly when it came to protecting the crown and her children's interests.

As a Catholic, she was determined to limit the Huguenots' (French Protestants) power in France, and some believe she helped instigate the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 during which hundreds of Protestants were murdered. She also occasionally played one side against another, especially if it meant preserving her son's power. One author said Catherine acted in favor of Catholicism only when there was an advantage to the crown. She died January 5, 1589.