

Stewardship Salutations.
by Simone Brosig, Ph.D.

Christ is risen!

In his article for last month's Carillon, Bishop Henry fittingly recalled this ancient Easter greeting. It seems to me that Lent captures the imagination of Catholics more readily than Easter. We begin Lent with the visible sign of ashes on our foreheads. Then for forty days we avoid eating meat on Fridays and observe other disciplines of prayer and almsgiving. "What are you giving up for Lent?" is a common question discussed among Catholics. Or even "what are you doing for Lent?" for some people don't just give up something but introduce a devotion or a charitable commitment. Finally, the season of Lent concludes with the marathon of liturgies at Holy Week. The Lenten season has developed these concrete markers that make the season easy to identify, characterise, and keep in the forefront of our minds. Yet, the season of Lent is preparatory. Its focus is the day of the Resurrection. The goal of Lent is Easter! What are you doing for Easter—beyond consuming the feast on Easter Sunday?

Christ is risen!

Recently, I was discussing stewardship with the staff at St. Patrick's parish in Calgary. Several times in our conversation, the group held up the participants in RCIA as exemplary stewards. I suggested that it might be worth considering what it is about the RCIA process that forms participants into enthusiastic stewards, conscious of living out their often recent baptismal promises from moment to moment. One person commented upon the benefit of meeting regularly in a small group to read and discuss Scripture and to pray. It was also remarked that having been received into the church at the Easter Vigil, the participants continue to meet during the entire season of Easter for Mystagogy, a process of integration into the community as full members. Others in the group then caught on: What are we doing for Easter? What does it mean to be an Easter people? We have a Lenten mission but what about an Easter mission?

Christ is risen!

This ancient Easter greeting is still in regular use today among the Eastern churches (Catholic and Orthodox). My Byzantine Catholic friends will use this greeting in a liturgical setting until the feast of Ascension. They also use it outside of the liturgy in the home with their families and on the street when meeting one another. Instead of "Good morning!" or "Hi there!" it's "Christ is risen!" The use of an Easter greeting takes our faith out of the church building and calls us to consider how we are stewards of the Resurrection, that is, how we are stewards of our baptismal promises at all times and in all places.

Christ is risen!

Stewardship is a way of living, a spirituality that we aim to cultivate in ourselves such that it becomes a disposition. A disposition is that which orients everything we do. Even when doing good, we must continually pray that we work for God's glory and not for our own. To say *Christ is risen!* throughout the Easter season, serves as a constant reminder of the hope in which we are invited to live by the promise of the Resurrection. In fact, the Eastern churches actually have a Christian greeting for other times of the year as well. The use of these ancient greetings with other Christian friends who understand is one way to encourage one another in the growth of holiness. Moreover, it serves as a witness to others of our commitment to living our whole lives in discipleship to Christ.

He is risen indeed!

Seasonal Christian Salutations

Easter

Greeting: *Christ is risen!*

Response: *He is risen indeed!*

Christmas

Greeting: *Christ is born!*

Response: *Glorify Him!*

Ordinary Time

Greeting: *Glory be to Jesus Christ!*

Response: *Glory be forever!*