



May 1, 2022

## Third Sunday of Easter

*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out...  
Revelation 5:13*



Dear Friends;

A couple of months ago, I wrote a response to the editor of America magazine (a Jesuit periodical). I was responding to some callous remarks he made about people who are attached to their animals. He said maybe they grieve so much because they realize their animal is dead forever. He said they won't see them again. I wrote that he has a very sterile image of the life to come. If as it says in 2 Peter, "*we await a new heavens and earth,*" why would they not also be populated with the creatures and nature that is so dear to us in this life? I added, "*I firmly expect to see my beloved dog Kylie in that new reality.*"

The message of Easter is not primarily a message about the body of Jesus. Unfortunately, we have been taught to think of it as a one-time "miracle" to prove him divine. We expect a lone Jesus coming out of the tomb as if to say, "*Look at me I rose from the dead!*" That's why many of us miss the importance of Easter, if it doesn't include us, we tend not to be too interested.

However, the New Testament and the early Church have a broader understanding of the resurrection. St Ambrose of Milan [d. 397] preached, "*In Christ's resurrection the earth itself arose.*" This resonates with our reading from the Book of Revelation. We are shown a vision of all creation, not just humans, praising and blessing God. In the reading from the Gospel of John, the tremendous catch of fish represents the fullness of creation.

In the gospels, the dragnet is a symbol for the Kingdom. The number of one-hundred-fifty-three is symbolic. It was thought that was the number of all species of fish. It represents the universal mission of the apostles to catch everything in the net of the Kingdom.

As the first fruit of an abundant harvest, the Risen Lord, pledges a future for all the dead, not only dead humans, but of all species. In the crucified and risen Jesus, God graciously gives life to all the dead, brings new beings into existence, and saves the whole cosmos.

Jesus of Nazareth, the very Word and Wisdom of God incarnate, was made of the stuff of the earth and stars. He was part of the historical and biological community of the Earth. The body of Jesus existed in a network of relationships that came from and extends to the whole physical universe. As a child of the earth, he died, and earth claimed him back in the grave. But in the resurrection his flesh was called to life again and transformed.

Risen from the dead Jesus is a reborn a child of the earth radiantly transfigured. The world of matter and evolving life will not be left behind, but it also will be transfigured by the resurrecting action of the Creator. Easter gives meaning and direction to the whole community of creation. Easter is the announcement of our common hope. The Risen Christ is all around us—in our neighbors, in the flowers in the garden and the budding fruit trees, in our pets and livestock, in the seas and rivers, mountains and forests.

The whole of creation is filled with God who shines through even in the darkest places of our lives. "*Your life, O God, is my life, our life, and the life of the whole cosmos!*"

Christ is Risen!

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)*