

## Easter MMXX

**Brothers & Sisters:** Over the past week, the first week of this 50-day Easter Season, the gospels have proclaimed the accounts of the resurrection. We know that Mary Magdalene found the empty “on the first day of the week.” Sunday was the first day of the workweek in the Roman world of the first century. However, the discovery of the empty tomb on that particular Sunday morning, changed all Sundays forever for Christians.

Though the Christians of the first century still had to go to work, they would gather early Sunday morning for the celebration of the Eucharist. Every Sunday celebration of the Eucharist was, and is, a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, as we do with other events, we have an annual celebration to commemorate the ‘anniversary’ of the event.

The Easter commemoration requires us to be mindful of the historical circumstances of the first Easter and now, the current one. The lives of people in the Jewish community of Jesus’ time was relatively gloomy. Most people were very poor; illness of every type was dreaded; Palestine was occupied in a brutal fashion by the Roman Empire; not all believed in life after death; and, it was common for people to hear that their troubles were a punishment from God.

In the three years of his public ministry, Jesus introduced a whole new way of understanding life and God. God was not a punishing God, but a loving and merciful God. Life was not meant to be a curse, but rather, a blessing. Hate and violence was not the path forward; instead, love, peace and compassion.