*Host or designated reader/leader begins the Upper Room prayer hour by reading this message from Fr. David:*

**Message for April 2019**

Dear Friends in Christ;

In Christ:

In the first vision of St. John from the book of the Apocalypse or Revelation, Jesus approaches St. John who has fallen to the ground (in adoration). John writes about the moment.

 *When I caught sight of him, I fell down at His feet as though dead. He touched me with His right hand and said, “Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever”. (RV 1:17-18)*

This is a fitting time to discuss and pray about Jesus’ title of the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end). So as we near the Easter Season or find ourselves at the beginning of this Holy Season of Grace we consider the momentous paradigm shift accomplished through our Savior. Namely through the Paschal Mystery the Christ made all things new, through the end of His life by death on the cross we have a new beginning by His resurrection. In many ways, in all ways, in God’s Way – Jesus is defined perfectly by this pre-eminent title – **THE BEGINNING AND THE END**

Let us dive into this reality in our Upper Rooms.

Fr. David

*Open with Sign of Cross and then this prayer:*

**Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

L: **Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, O Lord, and they shall be created.**

R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

L: **Let us pray – God our Father, pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on the world. You sent the Spirit on Your Church to begin the teaching of the Gospel; now let the Spirit continue to work in the world through the hearts of all who believe. Through Christ our Lord.**

R: Amen

L: **You, O lord, will open my lips.**

R: And my tongue shall announce Your praise.

L: **Incline unto my aid, O God.**

R: O Lord, make haste to help me.

L: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**.

R: As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

Read from CCC #359

*St. Paul tells us that the human race takes its origin from two men: Adam and Christ. . . The first man, Adam, he says, became a living soul, the last Adam (Jesus) a life-giving spirit. The first Adam was made (created) by the last Adam, (Jesus) from whom he also received his soul, to give him life... The second Adam (Jesus) stamped his image on the first Adam when he created him. That is why he took on himself the role and the name of the first Adam, in order that he might not lose what he had made in his own image. The first Adam, the last Adam (Jesus): the first had a beginning (Adam), the last knows no end (Jesus). The last Adam (Jesus) is indeed the first; as he himself says: "I am the first and the last."*

1. Discuss how all things come into being. Whose will is it? Why does God continue to create? What does it add to the Trinity?
2. Discuss how all things are made new in Jesus and speculate about how all things **couldn’t** be (was impossible for it to be) renewed before the Incarnation of Jesus.
3. Discuss the issue of human life’s end (or our death). Can there be salvation without Christ? Our never ending life is connected to His Life. How? Is Baptism into Christ necessary for salvation? What does the Church say about salvation for the un-baptized? (Hint; look it up in the CCC)

Read from Revelation 22

A) Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water,[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/revelation/22/%22%20%5Cl%20%2274022001-1) sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its street. On either side of the river grew the tree of life that produces fruit twelve times a year, once each month; the leaves of the trees serve as medicine for the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will look upon his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more, nor will they need light from lamp or sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever.VII. EPILOGUE[\*](http://www.usccb.org/bible/revelation/22/#74022006-1)

B) And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true, and the Lord, the God of prophetic spirits, sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon.” “Behold, I am coming soon.” Blessed is the one who keeps the prophetic message of this book.

C) It is I, John, who heard and saw these things, and when I heard and saw them I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said to me, “Don’t! I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the message of this book. Worship God.”

D) Then he said to me, “Do not seal up the prophetic words of this book, for the appointed time is near. Let the wicked still act wickedly, and the filthy still be filthy. The righteous must still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

E) “Behold, I am coming soon. I bring with me the recompense I will give to each according to his deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

F) Blessed are they who wash their robes so as to have the right to the tree of life and enter the city through its gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the unchaste, the murderers, the idol-worshipers, and all who love and practice deceit.

Questions from each section:

1. Speculate on what the Tree of Life is and what it means
2. How does the Catholic reconcile with the fact that the end of the world hasn’t come yet, why does Scripture seem to bear this it out so differently?
3. The overall message of Sacred Scripture is “Worship God”. Come up with ten specific ways we worship Him. What is the best way to Worship God? Is there a better or worse way?
4. Do you remember when the bible tells us that the Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by God so that He would be able to show His glory in the Exodus of His people? How does this passage relate to that act of God?
5. Will God’s mercy outweigh your wicked deeds? Can you “let go and let God love you,” even from a sinful past? If you know someone who has a hard time with this, what can you tell them?
6. The sacraments signify our gateway to God and the Heavenly Host. How can we intensify or build up our understanding of this reality. Not just to “feel” it but to understand it and live it out.

Life is always changing; we change greatly in our lifetimes. Is it a comfort for you to know that Jesus is the Beginning and the End? That all things come to be, are sustained and are brought to completion, through Him? Jesus as the Son of God and Son of Man is the unchanging reality of power, love and mercy. With Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega we fit “in-between” very well don’t we? This and many other things give us peace (in the here and now) and hope for future glory. Fill this conversation out by asking the question, what gives you “peace” and “hope” for today and tomorrow?

Please pray this Litany together for prayer

# Litany of the Resurrection

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ hear us. Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven: have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world: have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit: have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God: have mercy on us.

*Response to the following invocations:* ***Alleluia!***

1. Risen Lord, handed over to death for our sins, and raised up for our justification. – Alleluia!

2. Risen Lord, who died and came to life again that you might be Lord of both the living and the dead – Alleluia!

3. Risen Lord, established as Son of God in power by the Resurrection from the dead – Alleluia!

4. Risen Lord, fulfillment of prophecy and foundation of our faith – Alleluia!

5. Risen Lord, stone rejected by the builders which has become the cornerstone – Alleluia!

6. Risen Lord, in whom all things are made new and we become a new creation – Alleluia!

7. Risen Lord, first fruits of the dead and promise of our resurrection – Alleluia!

8. Risen Lord, in whom it pleased God to make all fullness reside – Alleluia

*The response to the following invocations is:* ***Grant us your peace!***

9. Risen Lord, who entered heaven to appear now before the Father on our behalf – Grant us your peace!

10. Risen Lord, in whom God has reconciled us to himself, granting us repentance, and the forgiveness of our sins – Grant us your peace!

11. Risen Lord, through whom we have access to the Father in one Spirit – Grant us your peace!

12. Risen Lord, receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit – Grant us your peace!

13. Risen Lord, who will come again in power to judge the living and the dead – Grant us your peace!

14. Risen Lord, cause and exemplar of our resurrection – Grant us your peace!

15. Risen Lord, with power to raise to eternal life all who believe in you – Grant us your peace!

16. Risen Lord, the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all who believe in you – Grant us your peace!

*The response to the following invocations is:* ***Raise us to new life!***

17. Risen Lord, who in your love for the penitent sinners appeared first to Mary Magdalene – Raise us to new life!

18. Risen Lord, who in your love for all men and women sent the apostles to preach the Gospel to the whole world – Raise us to new life!

19. Risen Lord, in whom we become true children of God and heirs of heaven – Raise us to new life!

20. Risen Lord, present and active among us in your body the Church – Raise us to new life!

21. Risen Lord, calling us by your resurrection to rise from the death to sin – Raise us to new life!

22. Risen Lord, in whom we are established in liberty as children of God – Raise us to new life!

23. Risen Lord, in whom we become a dwelling place for God in the Spirit – Raise us to new life!

24. Risen Lord, in whom we experience genuine community with all who are members of one body – Raise us to new life!

*The response to the following invocations is:* ***Send us your Spirit!***

25. Risen Lord, opening our minds to understand all the words spoken about you in the Scripture – Send us your Spirit!

26. Risen Lord, revealing yourself to your disciples in the breaking of the bread, and to us in Holy Eucharist – Send us your Spirit!

27. Risen Lord, you invite us to relive your Paschal Mystery each time we celebrate the Eucharist – Send us your Spirit!

28. Risen Lord, in whom we are transformed, to share the life and the glory of heaven – Send us your Spirit!

29. Risen Lord, in and with you we experience victory over the death of fear and anxiety that is involved in each new growth experience of our lives – Send us your Spirit!

30. Risen Lord, whose victory over death offers encouragement to all who suffer for justice’s sake – Send us your Spirit!

31. Risen Lord, in whom we find the surest means for the resurrection of society – Send us your Spirit!

32. Risen Lord, in whom we are already raised up to live now no longer for ourselves but for God – Send us your Spirit!

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world! Spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world! Graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world! Have mercy on us!

V. Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.

R. You are the Savior of the world!

**Let us pray**: Heavenly Father, in rising up your Son Jesus Christ from the grave, you have raised up the hope of this fallen world. In spite of the many problems in our world today, in spite of our own serious problems, your power will finally triumph. We rejoice in the grace of Christ’s Resurrection, and thank you for this wonderful gift. May it transform our lives, and bring us to eternal life. Amen.