**C - Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 18, 2025**

**16th Morontia Appearances of Jesus on Friday May 5, 30 A.D. in the courtyard of Nicodemus about 9 p.m.**

**+A religious painting of person

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**Classical Orthodox Icon of Jesus’s Decent into Hell**

**Introductory Reflection –** Unique to this 16th morontia appearance, Jesus asserted to the diverse gathering that they should “be stirred in your hearts by the knowledge that the dead of an age entered upon the eternal ascent soon after I left Joseph’s new tomb.”

This captivating icon represents the oral tradition that after his resurrection Jesus descended into hell to rescue those who souls who had been held captive since the beginning of the world, in this case releasing Adam and Eve. The Apostles’ Creed and the Athanasian Creed proclaim that Jesus “descended into hell,” with no mention of Jesus raising the dead to eternal life. This episode is not stated in the Nicene Creed with only partial, tangential mentions in the New Testament. Unsurprisingly, it is described in part in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, yet it is an event different than that found in the Urantia revelation.

**Reading 1 - Urantia Part I. The Central and Superuniverses, Paper 30 - Personalities of the Grand Universe, Section 4. The Ascending Mortals, Paragraph 11- 13**

30:4.11 (341.1) 2. *Sleeping Survivors.* All mortals of survival status, in the custody of personal guardians of destiny, pass through the portals of natural death and, on the third period, personalize on the mansion worlds. Those accredited beings who have, for any reason, been unable to attain that level of intelligence mastery and endowment of spirituality which would entitle them to personal guardians, cannot thus immediately and directly go to the mansion worlds. Such surviving souls must rest in unconscious sleep until the judgment day of a new epoch, a new dispensation, the coming of a Son of God to call the rolls of the age and adjudicate the realm, and this is the general practice throughout all Nebadon. It was said of Christ Michael that, when he ascended on high at the conclusion of his work on earth, “He led a great multitude of captives.” And these captives were the sleeping survivors from the days of Adam to the day of the Master’s resurrection on Urantia.

30:4.12 (341.2) The passing of time is of no moment to sleeping mortals; they are wholly unconscious and oblivious to the length of their rest. On reassembly of personality at the end of an age, those who have slept five thousand years will react no differently than those who have rested five days. Aside from this time delay these survivors pass on through the ascension regime identically with those who avoid the longer or shorter sleep of death.

30:4.13 (341.3) These dispensational classes of world pilgrims are utilized for group morontia activities in the work of the local universes. There is a great advantage in the mobilization of such enormous groups; they are thus kept together for long periods of effective service.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Reflection –** As this reading from Part 1 of Urantia indications the passage to the next world is more complicated than the oral tradition presents. Revelation is required. From **Urantia 76:6.0** we know that Adam and Eve we long ago forgiven and “repersonalized and reassembled” on the mansions worlds where they quickly continued, now as ascending sons of God. They were not part of the third general dispensation on Urantia at the time of Jesus’s resurrection and ascension, but part of a special merciful dispensation.

**Responsorial Psalm -** [**Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/66?1) [[2]](#footnote-2) **R (cf. 1) “I will hold you above everything else that exists – my God, my Holy Protector.”**

“You are kind and compassionate, long to anger, endless in love. Your goodness is everywhere; your compassion extends to all of your works.”  
**R. “I will hold you above everything else that exists – my God, my Holy Protector.”**

“All your creation, God, thanks you; all the faithful cry out praise of your blessings. They proclaim the glory of your guidance; your unflinching strength” - they constantly speak of it - ” **R. “I will hold you above everything else that exists – my God, my Holy Protector.”**

“To make known to humanity your strength, the glory of your eternal presence. You care for the entire world. Your governance continues from one generation to the next.”   
**R. “I will hold you above everything else that exists–my God, my Holy Protector.” [[3]](#footnote-3)**

**Reflection –** This psalm in the context of Jesus’s 16th morontial appearance take on a wider and deeper meaning for God’s compassion, extending to a path to eternal life after we leave this world.

**Reading 2 – Urantia Part IV. The Life and Teachings of Jesus, Paper 189 - The Resurrection, Section 3. The Dispensational Resurrection, Paragraphs 1 – 3**

189:3.1 (2024.3) A little after half past four o’clock this Sunday morning, Gabriel summoned the archangels to his side and made ready to inaugurate the general resurrection of the termination of the Adamic dispensation on Urantia. When the vast host of the seraphim and the cherubim concerned in this great event had been marshaled in proper formation, the morontia Michael appeared before Gabriel, saying: “As my Father has life in himself, so has he given it to the Son to have life in himself. Although I have not yet fully resumed the exercise of universe jurisdiction, this self-imposed limitation does not in any manner restrict the bestowal of life upon my sleeping sons; let the roll call of the planetary resurrection begin.”

189:3.2 (2024.4) The circuit of the archangels then operated for the first time from Urantia. Gabriel and the archangel hosts moved to the place of the spiritual polarity of the planet; and when Gabriel gave the signal, there flashed to the first of the system mansion worlds the voice of Gabriel, saying: “By the mandate of Michael, let the dead of a Urantia dispensation rise!” Then all the survivors of the human races of Urantia who had fallen asleep since the days of Adam, and who had not already gone on to judgment, appeared in the resurrection halls of mansonia in readiness for morontia investiture. And in an instant of time the seraphim and their associates made ready to depart for the mansion worlds. Ordinarily these seraphic guardians, onetime assigned to the group custody of these surviving mortals, would have been present at the moment of their awaking in the resurrection halls of mansonia, but they were on this world itself at this time because of the necessity of Gabriel’s presence here in connection with the morontia resurrection of Jesus.

189:3.3 (2024.5) Notwithstanding that countless individuals having personal seraphic guardians and those achieving the requisite attainment of spiritual personality progress had gone on to mansonia during the ages subsequent to the times of Adam and Eve, and though there had been many special and millennial resurrections of Urantia sons, this was the third of the planetary roll calls, or complete dispensational resurrections. The first occurred at the time of the arrival of the Planetary Prince, the second during the time of Adam, and this, the third, signalized the morontia resurrection, the mortal transit, of Jesus of Nazareth. [[4]](#footnote-4)

**Reflection -** Gabriel and his archangels actually inaugurated this third general resurrection at the command of the morontial Jesus. Jesus was not present at this general resurrection.

**Alleluia – Urantia** [**John 13:34**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/13?34) **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: love one another as I have loved you.  
**R.** **Alleluia, alleluia.[[5]](#footnote-5)**

**Gospel – Urantia, Part IV. The Life and Teachings of Jesus, Paper 193 – Final Appearances and Ascension, Section 0. Introduction, Paragraphs 1 - 6**

193:0.1 (2052.1) The sixteenth morontia manifestation of Jesus occurred on Friday, May 5, in the courtyard of Nicodemus, about nine o’clock at night. On this evening the Jerusalem believers had made their first attempt to get together since the resurrection. Assembled here at this time were the eleven apostles, the women’s corps and their associates, and about fifty other leading disciples of the Master, including a number of the Greeks. This company of believers had been visiting informally for more than half an hour when, suddenly, the morontia Master appeared in full view and immediately began to instruct them. Said Jesus:

193:0.2 (2052.2) “Peace be upon you. This is the most representative group of believers—apostles and disciples, both men and women—to which I have appeared since the time of my deliverance from the flesh. I now call you to witness that I told you beforehand that my sojourn among you must come to an end; I told you that presently I must return to the Father. And then I plainly told you how the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews would deliver me up to be put to death, and that I would rise from the grave. Why, then, did you allow yourselves to become so disconcerted by all this when it came to pass? and why were you so surprised when I rose from the tomb on the third day? You failed to believe me because you heard my words without comprehending the meaning thereof.

193:0.3 (2052.3) “And now you should give ear to my words lest you again make the mistake of hearing my teaching with the mind while in your hearts you fail to comprehend the meaning. From the beginning of my sojourn as one of you, I taught you that my one purpose was to reveal my Father in heaven to his children on earth. I have lived the God-revealing bestowal that you might experience the God-knowing career. I have revealed God as your Father in heaven; I have revealed you as the sons of God on earth. It is a fact that God loves you, his sons. By faith in my word this fact becomes an eternal and living truth in your hearts. When, by living faith, you become divinely God-conscious, you are then born of the spirit as children of light and life, even the eternal life wherewith you shall ascend the universe of universes and attain the experience of finding God the Father on Paradise.

193:0.4 (2052.4) “I admonish you ever to remember that your mission among men is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom—the reality of the fatherhood of God and the truth of the sonship of man. Proclaim the whole truth of the good news, not just a part of the saving gospel. Your message is not changed by my resurrection experience. Sonship with God, by faith, is still the saving truth of the gospel of the kingdom. You are to go forth preaching the love of God and the service of man. That which the world needs most to know is: Men are the sons of God, and through faith they can actually realize, and daily experience, this ennobling truth. My bestowal should help all men to know that they are the children of God, but such knowledge will not suffice if they fail personally to faith-grasp the saving truth that they are the living spirit sons of the eternal Father. The gospel of the kingdom is concerned with the love of the Father and the service of his children on earth.

193:0.5 (2053.1) “Among yourselves, here, you share the knowledge that I have risen from the dead, but that is not strange. I have the power to lay down my life and to take it up again; the Father gives such power to his Paradise Sons. You should the rather be stirred in your hearts by the knowledge that the dead of an age entered upon the eternal ascent soon after I left Joseph’s new tomb. I lived my life in the flesh to show how you can, through loving service, become God-revealing to your fellow men even as, by loving you and serving you, I have become God-revealing to you. I have lived among you as the Son of Man that you, and all other men, might know that you are all indeed the sons of God. Therefore, go you now into all the world preaching this gospel of the kingdom of heaven to all men. Love all men as I have loved you; serve your fellow mortals as I have served you. Freely you have received, freely give. Only tarry here in Jerusalem while I go to the Father, and until I send you the Spirit of Truth. He shall lead you into the enlarged truth, and I will go with you into all the world. I am with you always, and my peace I leave with you.”

193:0.6 (2053.2) When the Master had spoken to them, he vanished from their sight. It was near daybreak before these believers dispersed; all night they remained together, earnestly discussing the Master’s admonitions and contemplating all that had befallen them. James Zebedee and others of the apostles also told them of their experiences with the morontia Master in Galilee and recited how he had three times appeared to them.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Reflection -** This appearance was in the courtyard of Nicodemus, a wealthy, elderly Jew who had been a member of the Sanhedrin before meeting secretly with Jesus at the home of Flavius, a Greek. He later became such a follower of Jesus that with Joseph of Arimathea he boldly claimed Jesus’s body from Pilate to give it a proper burial. This 16th morontia appearance of Jesus was at the first meeting to the 11 apostles, the women’s corps and their associates (up to 62 in total) and about 50 other believers, including Greeks.

Ironically, what was conveyed in oral tradition of this appearance is Jesus referring to his resurrection of the dead as depicted in many icons over the centuries

In addition to the allusion to the raising of the dead of an age to enter the eternal ascent, Jesus answers Nicodemus’ original question about how to be reborn: “When, by living faith, you become divinely God-conscious, you are then born of the spirit as children of light and life, even the eternal life”.

Lastly, Jesus clearly states his Gospel for his followers to proclaim is “the reality of the fatherhood of God and the truth of the sonship of man,” not that he rose from the dead.

To me this is an incredibly important appearance because in it Jesus emphasizes God is a loving father, we are his children, and we should love one another now as Jesus loved his apostles and all men and women of his time.

This is his succinct message, rather than a message about Jesus. Here Jesus is trying to inoculate the apostles from distorting his message to one *about* him, that namely that he arose from the dead and as a result of his triumph over death so we can as well.

It proved to have little immediate impact, but over the centuries Jesus’s message has survived: God is a loving father, we are his children, and we should love one another now as Jesus loved his apostles and the men and women of his time.

1. **Replaced Reading 1 -** [**Acts 14:21-27**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/acts/14?21)

   After Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples,  
   they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” They appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished. And when they arrived, they called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. After and inspired by Pamela Greenberg’s **The Complete Psalms – The Book of Prayer Songs in a New Translation.** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **Replaced Responsorial Psalm -** [**Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/66?1) **R (cf. 1) I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

   The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.  
   **R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

   Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might.  **R.  I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

   Let them make known your might to the children of Adam, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is a kingdom for all ages, and your dominion endures through all generations. **R I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.** [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **Reading 2 -** [**Revelation 21:1-5a**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/revelation/21?1)

   Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.”  
     
   The One who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **Alleluia -** [**John 13:34**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/13?34)  **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

   I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: love one another as I have loved you.  
   **R.** **Alleluia, alleluia** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. **Gospel -** [**John 13:31-33a, 34-35**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/13?31)

   When Judas had left them, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”  
     [↑](#footnote-ref-6)