

Editorial: A few days on, does Easter still matter?

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A couple of turning points happened recently. We celebrated Jesus' resurrection, and I turned 50.

These are nowhere near equal in their importance. For one, my turning 50 is a turning point for only a small group of people. Jesus' resurrection turned world history.

Turning 50 did spur some self-reflection, however. It's a sobering thing to know—and not just casually—that I've lived most of my life. It's also a somewhat electrifying experience to know the end of the road is closer than the beginning.

Turning 30 also spurred some self-reflection, but not so expansive. I don't know why, but when I turned 30, it was important to me to spend the next 30 years giving more than I took during my first 30. I was sure I had another 30 years then. But another 50 now? Probably not.

The bad news is, I could have taken my 30-year-old pledge more seriously. The good news is, I have 10 more years to make good on my aspiration.

The day I turned 50 was a joyful day. I got to spend time with some of my family. I got calls from other parts of my family. Part of my joy is I'm proud to be 50. Not everyone gets to be 50. Some of my friends didn't even get to be 40.

So, yes, taking in the day I turned 50 was a gift, a joyful gift.

Followed by the next day. How is it that a special day gives way so easily to ... to just another day? It's exciting when you turn 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90

or more, but who cares when you're 50 and one day?

That special day—our birthday—somehow loses its spark the day after.

Easter

It's like Easter.

If you're in a tradition that observes Lent—the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday—you're accustomed to spending weeks anticipating and preparing for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. But not the Monday after.

If you're not in that tradition but your church presents an Easter musical, drama or other live performance and you are in the choir, orchestra, band or otherwise, you also spend weeks looking ahead to Easter. But not the Monday after.

There are Easter egg hunts and spring festivals. Some still shop for fancy new clothes for Easter morning. Those who still get together with family for a special Easter lunch make a last run to the grocery store for the holiday meal.

When the day finally arrives, we pack into churches, sing hymns and spiritual songs specific to Jesus' resurrection, and hear a familiar yet rousing sermon. When the minister proclaims, "He is risen," we respond, "He is risen, indeed." We take family photos. We eat lunch.

And then Monday comes.

As powerful a thing as Easter is, we manage to get up Monday morning and go about our day as though we didn't proclaim just the day before that a man rose from the dead *and* that *that* man was none other than God in the flesh. Surely, something about that ought to change how we go about

Monday. But does it?

Monday

If, on Monday, you're already planning to attend worship and maybe Bible study the next Sunday, then Easter has shaped you in a way you may not be fully aware. The whole reason we gather to worship Jesus on Sunday mornings is to commemorate that first "first day of the week" when the women found Jesus' tomb empty.

That discovery changed all their next days, and those of countless other people. If nothing else, that discovery changed many of our weekly routines—even if only culturally.

If, on Monday, you believe Jesus hears your prayers and talks to you, then Easter has a significant effect on your following days. A dead man doesn't hear prayer or talk back, and a mere man doesn't rise from the dead, nor does a mere man stick around 2,000 years to hear your prayers and mine.

Scripture and 2,000 years of constant witness testify Jesus is no mere man, nor is he dead. Think about that on Monday.

If what you do on Monday is in obedience to the Risen Lord, then Easter absolutely has changed, not just how you go about Monday, but how you go about all your days. Can we characterize what we did the Monday after Easter as obedience to the Risen Lord or as obedience to the daily grind?

Easter should spur us to such reflection. More than that, Easter should spur us to action—specifically, action obedient to Christ Jesus.

Tuesday

I pray with pastors and ministry leaders throughout each month. I may have mentioned that before, but right now, as I write, I can't remember. I'm told this sort of thing happens when you get to be ... my age.

As I was saying, I pray with ... oh, right, I already told you that.

I don't share these prayers with the public, but this time, one of the pastors said my prayer sounded like the start of an editorial. I really hadn't meant it to be, but his comment made me think.

Speaking of, that's what I really hope my editorials do—make us think. At a bare minimum, anyway.

The gist of my prayer was that Easter happened, and so did Monday. Now, here we are a couple of days later, and I bet we've moved on. As every pastor knows, Sunday's coming. And between now and then, we have things to do.

Major things have happened in our world in the last few days. Pope Francis dying is just one of them, as significant an event as that is. Major things are happening still—in our communities, our state, our country, our world. And at every level and in every area—religious, political, cultural, economic and otherwise—Easter is the prime turning point.

Through and in all our world and all its happenings, Easter proclaims Jesus is conqueror of sin and death, Risen Lord, King of kings and Lord of lords, Eternal Life, the Resurrection.

I may not have another 50 years, but I do have today. What difference will Easter make in me today?

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, Lord,
take and seal it.
Seal it for thy courts above."
(["Come Thou Fount"](#) by Robert Robinson)

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