

The image features a central white circle with a thin brown border, set against a background of numerous thin, brown, radiating lines that resemble sunbeams. Inside the circle, the text is arranged vertically. At the top, the words "EASTER 2021" are written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. Below this, the phrase "Rise With Christ" is written in a large, elegant, black cursive script. At the bottom of the circle, the words "DAILY DEVOTIONS" are written in a black, sans-serif font, similar to the top line but smaller.

EASTER 2021

*Rise With
Christ*

DAILY DEVOTIONS

For the members and friends of Wesley Freedom UMC
Ad majorem Dei gloriam

Introduction

Easter is a season of joy. It is the joy that death is not ultimately victorious. It is the joy that our God does not abandon us to suffering. It is the joy that Christ the Lord was raised from the dead and *is* risen today. After the Lenten penitential season, when we are compelled to confront our own shortcomings and the stark reality of the eventual death of our mortal bodies, Easter pierces the darkness and gloom with a ray of exuberant light. Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life! Hallelujah!

Over the last 40 days, those in the Church have been fasting, praying, and repenting of our sin. But now, the greater Holy Season has begun! As the temperatures rise from the winter chill and our world rises from the ravages of illness, it is fitting for the 2021 Easter Season to be one where we rise spiritually. As Christians, Easter Sunday is just the beginning of our Resurrection celebration. Eastertide is a 50-day season spanning the time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, and it is one of non-stop celebration.

This devotional guide is designed to help you continue your spiritual celebration throughout the season. Each day from Sunday – Friday, you will find a daily scripture to read to bring you into conversation with the God who raised Jesus from the dead. On **Sundays**, you will be invited to respond to Christ’s resurrection through a service of worship – whether online or in-person. **Monday – Friday** will include a brief reflection and challenge question.

May this Easter season find you rising with Christ!

Rev. Ian Collier
Feast of John and Charles Wesley, 2021

Easter Sunday, April 4

John 20:1-10

Thoughts for the Day: Easter Sunday is the holiest day of the year for Christians. Christ is Risen! Indeed, Christ is risen! Hallelujah!
Worship with your congregation.

Monday, April 5

John 20:11-18

Thoughts for the Day: When Mary Magdalene saw Jesus, she said, “Rabbouni” which is more literally translated, “*my teacher.*” But Jesus tells her not to grasp onto him. Instead, she is to go and tell the disciples. We each need to personally have a relationship with Christ, but Jesus is not our *personal* savior – he is not our possession. Instead, Christ is the source of our Good News which we are told to share with others. To know Christ as alive means that we cannot keep him to ourselves. *Who have you shared the Gospel with recently? Invite a friend or coworker to experience the worship of God with you next Sunday.*

Tuesday, April 6

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Thoughts for the Day: Paul gives us a startling challenge today. He writes, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” All we do, and our whole redemption, is the result of God’s grace. But, God’s grace is *empowering*, not *overpowering*. If we receive the news of Christ’s resurrection but do not cooperate to raise our souls from the pit of sin, and raise our world from the shackles of despair, then the grace of God for us *will* have been in vain. *How must you cooperate with God to prevent God’s grace from being in vain?*

Wednesday, April 7

Return to Sunday’s Scripture – John 20:1-10

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, April 8

Mark 16:1-16

Thoughts for the Day: In this Resurrection story, the realization that Jesus has been raised is not met with joy and exuberance, but with amazement and terror. It was sad, but spiritually easier, to understand Jesus as a failed prophet. But if Jesus was raised, then nobody could deny that Jesus actually was a victorious Messiah after all! Now, there could be no denying God's endorsement of Christ's commands to give away money, security, and earthly prosperity for the sake of God. It is scary to live in a world where our priorities have all been turned upside down now that death is not the end. *What scares you about a world where everything that Jesus said is true?*

Friday, April 9

1 Corinthians 15:12-26

Thoughts for the Day: While it's always commendable to try and find commonalities between faith communities, Christianity can never be boiled down to abstract, universal principles. For us, everything we believe hinges on the historical reality that after his crucifixion, death, and burial, Christ's human body was physically resurrected and transformed. If Christ was never really resurrected, then Death is the ultimate winner, and our faith is a lie. But since Christ *was* resurrected, we can trust that death is not really the end for us, either. It is life, not death, which carries the weight of finality. *Does Christ's resurrection make a difference in your life? What would it look like to live a life that wouldn't make sense if the resurrection didn't happen?*

Saturday, April 10 – Sabbath

Sunday, April 11

Luke 24:13-35

Thoughts for the Day: The disciples recognize Jesus through the celebration of Holy Communion. *Worship with your congregation. If you attend Wesley Freedom in-person, meet the risen Christ today through Holy Communion.*

Monday, April 12

Isaiah 25:6-9

Thoughts for the Day: One of the common metaphors throughout the scriptures for how life will be on earth when God reigns is the banquet or party. When we think of the way Christ made himself known through a Communion meal, we can't help but think of Isaiah's imagery – a feast of rich food and fine wines for all people, with all barriers between us and God destroyed. When we celebrate Holy Communion, it is like the appetizer – a foretaste – of this ultimate feast. *When you host parties or gatherings, who do you usually invite? Who might you need to invite to your table for it to look like God's table in the world to come?*

Tuesday, April 13

Acts 10:34-43

Thoughts for the Day: We have physical sacraments because we are, by nature, physical things. True, we remain spiritually alive in heaven after we die, but this is only a temporary spiritual existence – we are returned to our bodies at the Final Judgment. When Jesus was raised, his disciples testify that he even still ate and drank with them in the flesh! The Eucharist (Holy Communion) not only strengthens our spirits, but also sanctifies our flesh. *Our bodies will be resurrected, healed, and made immortal. What does it mean to you that we are supposed to keep our body holy just as we are supposed to keep our spirit holy?*

Wednesday, April 14

Return to Sunday's Scripture – Luke 24:13-35

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, April 15

Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, Chapters 5 – 7 [Appendix I]

Thoughts for the Day: St. Ignatius was one of the first Bishops of Antioch and a student of St. John. In his letter, he is warning the church at Smyrna not to listen to those who would limit Christ's resurrection to a merely spiritual sense. In fact, they didn't think bodies mattered at all and so this group of heretics only cared about *believing* in Christ, but not *doing* the work the Christ commanded. These people even went so far as to not participate in the Eucharist because they didn't think the bread and wine actually *did* anything. But St. Ignatius is clear – Christ was resurrected with a body, we are required to take care of each other's bodily needs, and the Eucharist conveys God's resurrecting power to our bodies. *How do you care for the physical needs of others? What are the opportunities in your church or community to follow this command of Christ?*

Friday, April 16

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Thoughts for the Day: Salvation does not mean that we are released from the consequences of, and punishments for, our actions. God still desires to help us reach a real spiritual destination as we mature in faith and sometimes our course needs to be corrected so we can get there. However, we are assured that God's correction for us, even when severe, is not evidence of abandonment – just the opposite! God will not give us over to death, and God's steadfast love means that we *can* become righteous and enter into God's gates through God's transforming grace. *Consider God's punishments as the drills an athlete must endure to get back into competitive shape after a time of lethargic living. Have you ever experienced a rough time in your life which, in retrospect, you can claim to be God working to make you more righteous?*

Saturday, April 17 – Sabbath

Sunday, April 18

Acts 3:12-19

Thoughts for the Day: In Christ's death and resurrection, our sins are put to death and we are raised to a new forgiven life. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, April 19

Luke 24:36b-48

Thoughts for the Day: The idea of 'evangelism' has unfortunately become associated with angry people standing on sidewalks with signs that only mention our sin and God's wrath. However, according to Christ, our mission is to proclaim God's forgiveness *first!* For faithful Christians, our strategy of evangelization should be to lead with God's love and the offer of grace. Only then can people realize, without fear and manipulation, the sins for which they need to repent. *What does it look like to you to lead with Love? How can you proclaim God's forgiveness?*

Tuesday, April 20

1 John 1:1-2:2

Thoughts for the Day: Understanding Sin requires a balance. On the one hand, we have to be honest with ourselves that we all have sinned and still sin. This is a real illness that we struggle against. To deny our situation both calls God a liar (blasphemy) and could lead us into worse sin by presuming to punish the sins of others – remember, only the one without sin may throw a stone (John 8:7). On the other hand, this should not be an occasion for self-loathing or despair. God has promised to forgive all the sins we confess. *And God will work within us to reform our sinful habits and desires – “cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* This is our ultimate hope. *Be honest with yourself: what are the sins you have committed this week? Are you ready to confess them out loud and find forgiveness?*

Wednesday, April 21

Return to Sunday's Scripture – Acts 3:12-19

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, April 22

Matthew 6:7-15

Thoughts for the Day: Part of learning to pray correctly is to understand that prayer both asks for God to act, and also reminds us of the way we are supposed to act as reflections of God. When Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, he reminds us that receiving forgiveness from God is not enough to be a faithful Christian. Even though God forgives freely, Christ directs Christians to only ask for as much forgiveness from God as we are willing to give to others. If you pray the Lord's Prayer as Christ commands, then this is the covenant you have made with God. Christ commands that full salvation is not only having our debt to God forgiven, but also canceling the debts that others owe to us. *Which is easier for you, accepting God's forgiveness, or forgiving others? Different translations of the Lord's Prayer talk about forgiving "debts," "sins," and "trespasses." What are the different meanings these hold for you?*

Friday, April 23

John 20:19-31

Thoughts for the Day: As Christians, Jesus has given us an incredible privilege and solemn responsibility. As the Body of Christ, we have been granted the power of God's own Spirit for the forgiveness of sins. We have the incredible honor to be the tools through which someone can actually be forgiven by God. This is what it means to be a part of the priesthood of all believers. Yet, this is also a serious duty. If we truly want all to be saved, we have the obligation to forgive others and declare God's forgiveness upon them. If we have the opportunity to forgive someone their sins and we don't, then instead of becoming the occasion for another's forgiveness, we become the reason they are still trapped in their sins. *Have you ever been in a situation with someone where they have confessed their sins to you? Were you able to proclaim God's forgiveness on them? If so, what was that like for you? If not, how do you imagine it would be? What would cause you anxiety?*

Saturday, April 24 – Sabbath

Sunday, April 25

John 21:1-18

Thoughts for the Day: Life as the Body of Christ means defining every action through the love and grace of God. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, April 26

John 21:15-18

Thoughts for the Day: When Jesus speaks in the Gospels, he often uses parables, metaphors, and pithy turns of phrase to pack in a lot of meaning to relatively few words. But in this scripture, there is deliberate repetition. *Why might Jesus have asked Peter if Peter loved him three times in a row? When else in the Gospels does Peter do something three times in a row? How might these episodes be related.*

Tuesday, April 27

John 21:15-18

Thoughts for the Day: Today, we return to this same scripture again. As we have read, Peter is given the opportunity to atone for his betrayal of Christ with three professions of love. But life in Christ is never just about canceling sin – there is always a new life and a new mission waiting for us on the other side of our forgiveness. *What is Peter's new purpose? What do you think this direction from Christ means? Have you found your Christian calling? Think about God's mission in the world – what part of that can you participate in?*

Wednesday, April 28

Return to Sunday's Scripture – John 21:1-18

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, April 29

1 Peter 4:1-19

Thoughts for the Day: After Christ entrusts Peter with the care of the church, Peter develops into a thoughtful and caring leader. In this letter, Peter encourages his churches and guides them in what to do when faced with rejection and threats from those around them. In Peter, we see someone grow from spiritual infancy as a fisherman-disciple who denies Jesus, to a mature and saintly leader who feeds Christ's flocks throughout the Roman Empire. *Peter was afraid of suffering because of Christ before Christ's resurrection. What has Peter learned by the time this letter is written? Re-state Peter's advice in your own words.*

Friday, April 30

Acts 4:32 – 5:11

Thoughts for the Day: Sometimes God's mission means telling the truth, even when it's uncomfortable. When Peter was given leadership over Christ's Church, it also became his responsibility to confront those Christians who didn't live up to their promises. Ananias and Sapphira didn't keep a financial pledge to the Church and attempted to deceive God. Leading in the Church means declaring God's grace and love *and* holding one another accountable to the vows and promises we have made. *Have you ever had to hold someone accountable to a promise (or vow, or contract)? Do you have anyone in your life (who you aren't married to) who knows you well enough to hold you accountable to your promises?*

Saturday, May 1 – Sabbath

Sunday, May 2

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Thoughts for the Day: Vocation – or, a calling – is one of the ways that Christians speak of the role that each of us can fill in Christ’s body. This Sunday at Wesley Freedom, we hear from some of our young people who are entering their time of vocational discernment as they prepare to complete their High School education. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, May 3

Exodus 3:1-12

Thoughts for the Day: From the call of Moses we learn that one way to define a vocation is the part of God’s action in the world that we are called to participate in. God had come down to deliver God’s people; Moses’ call was to participate in that deliverance by becoming the leader of the people and performing God’s wonders. *What is God’s mission in the world? Where do you see God at work in the world? Consider how you can participate in this work.*

Tuesday, May 4

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Thoughts for the Day: Finding our vocation requires discernment. Samuel mistook God’s voice at first and needed the help of a wise spiritual guide to discover that God was calling him. Samuel’s ministry was marked by his careful listening to what God told him, and his clear communication to the kings of Israel regarding what they were and were not to do. Discerning our vocation is an important endeavor, and one that everyone needs to take seriously and engage in carefully. *Pray to God asking him to open your mind and heart to receive his guidance and to speak to you to reveal how he is calling you to serve. Consider meeting with a spiritual leader in your life to help you discern your vocation.*

Wednesday, May 5

Return to Sunday’s Scripture – 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, May 6

Galatians 1:11-16; Acts 18:1-3

Thoughts for the Day: Paul understands that God has known the missionary role set aside for him even before Paul's life began. Yet, Paul still works as a tentmaker during his time travelling to proclaim the Gospel. Our vocation is not necessarily our money-making profession. If you can find a way to get paid through your calling from God, that's awesome! But if not, it doesn't mean you don't have a calling! If Paul is any indication, making money through an honorable profession or trade so that you can live into your calling outside of work is a faithful and biblical way to respond to God. *Do you consider your work a profession, trade, or vocation? If your work is not, by its nature, your vocation, how do you participate in God's mission outside of it?*

Friday, May 7

Acts 6:1-7

Thoughts for the Day: The great thing about serving God is that God wants you to be YOU and serve according to YOUR gifts and graces. Your vocation may challenge you, but if you are not using your talents and gifts from God, it's probably not your vocation. Paul was an educated & eloquent person and so his service looked like teaching and preaching. Others, like Stephen and the other first deacons, were able to serve through administration and leading missions. *What are your gifts and talents? Are you currently using them to participate in God's mission?*

Saturday, May 8 – Sabbath

Sunday, May 9

Genesis 1:1-4

Thoughts for the Day: Like a mother bird tenderly caring for her young, God hovers over creation at the very beginning and loves it into being. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, May 10

Job 38:1-30

Thoughts for the Day: Because we are the Body of Christ and share in Christ's own sonship, we most often address God as, 'Father.' However, when the scriptures describe God's relation to creation, it is often as Mother. The Book of Job metaphorically describes the sea as bursting out from God's womb and God swaddling it as a mother does her child. It uses similar metaphors for ice and hoarfrost. *What do you think the author of Job is trying to communicate about how God sees creation with these metaphors? How does it change your view of God to see God's nature as encompassing both the traditional Father and traditional Mother roles.*

Tuesday, May 11

Deuteronomy 32:1-12

Thoughts for the Day: The oldest copies of these verses paint a picture of the cosmos in which God has assigned different heavenly powers/angels (verse 8: 'sons of God/gods') to protect the nations of the earth, but God took Israel as his personal nation. God is not distant or aloof; God is not a hands-off deity. Instead, God acts for his people as a mother eagle – lifting them up on his wings, guiding them towards all goodness, and placing himself between them and harm. *Pray to God to care for you and your loved ones as a mother eagle cares for her young, knowing that in your baptism God has personally become your protector.*

Wednesday, May 12

Return to Sunday's Scripture – Genesis 1:1-4

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, May 13

Isaiah 42:14-16; Romans 8:22-25

Thoughts for the Day: In the Gospel of John, Jesus introduces the metaphor of being ‘born again;’ in today’s verses, the Prophet Isaiah uses the image of a mother in labor to describe God’s actions in birthing a restored world. As we know, we understand ourselves as participating in the mission of God – both in the joyful part of God’s mission, as well as in these times of labor. As St. Paul writes, all creation groans with God, “and not only the creation, but we ourselves.” We join God in God’s motherhood as we are born again and enter into God’s labor to birth a new world. *What are the labor pains of the restoration of the world for us? What parts of living a born-again life feel painful? What do you think it means that the whole creation groans with God for the new world to be born?*

Friday, May 14

Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, Chapter LX
[Appendix II]

Thoughts for the Day: Julian was a Medieval English nun who is believed to be the first woman to write a book in English. This book describes a mystical vision she received from God. In the vision, Jesus is identified as our perfect Mother – Jesus bears us within himself, brings us to new life through terrible labor pains (his crucifixion), and feeds us from his own body in Holy Communion. For Christians, motherhood is not limited to those who have produced a child from their body. Instead, we take Jesus as the example of perfect motherhood. *Who has been a spiritual mother in your life? Who do you know that exemplifies the motherly qualities shown by Jesus?*

Saturday, May 15 – Sabbath

Ascension Sunday, May 16

Acts 1:1-11

Thoughts for the Day: This week we encourage you to consider your SHAPE for serving in this season. Each day we will look at one of the components of who you are. You will discover that as your Spiritual Gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**osition in Life, and **E**xperience come together, you are uniquely fashioned to serve. Considering your unique SHAPE for serving will help you find places to serve which bring you joy and bring God glory. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, May 17

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Thoughts for the Day: **Spiritual gifts** are given by God to be used for his service. These are not skills or talents that we have worked at improving and honing over our life – spiritual gifts are those areas of who we are that exist as if they are part of our very nature and can be used to support God’s mission. Consider the list of gifts offered by Paul, but know that this is not an exhaustive list; it is a starting place. What comes most natural to you? *If you are a Wesley Freedom congregant, go to <http://wesleyfreedom57.ccbapps.com/survey/> and take the spiritual gifts inventory signing in with your Wesley Freedom Connects login. If you are joining us in this devotional from another congregation, search for and complete the “Spiritual Gifts Assessment Tool” from the ELCA.*

Tuesday, May 18

1 Corinthians 13

Thoughts for the Day: Paul reminds us that anything we do without love will not accomplish the spiritual purpose. Consider what you have a **heart** for and how you can focus your ministry around that love. *What do you love: gardening, nature, music, art, building, listening, healing, organization, animals, recovery, fellowship, eating, leadership? Who do you have a heart for: kids, teens, seniors, couples, those living in poverty, those suffering in injustice, those in recovery, those who want to learn?*

Wednesday, May 19

Nehemiah 3

Thoughts for the Day: In today's scripture we witness a community rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem each using their own abilities. What **abilities** do you have? This might be physical strength, patience to listen, endurance. This can also be skills you have learned along the way. Are you able to fix a roof, unclog a drain, teach a class, create a video? *Explore your abilities as these may be clues leading you towards your next God given assignment.*

Thursday, May 20

Acts 16:11-15

Thoughts for the Day: When Lydia began to believe, she considered what she had to offer. At that time, she was a person with a home to share and had time to offer hospitality, so this is what she offered the apostles. What we are called to do changes based on the season of life we are in. Consider your **position in life**: your physical health, those who you are responsible for caring for, the time and energy you have to invest, the resources you have to share. *Offer all of this to God and invite God to help you discern how and where you are called to serve in this moment.*

Friday, May 21

Matthew 4:18-22

Thoughts for the Day: Everything you have experienced has influenced who you are today and can empower you to help another. Consider your **experiences** and how they can help to shape the next chapter in your service to the Lord. For example, a cancer survivor may feel called to become a Stephen Minister to help another journey through illness. A person who has experienced grief may start a support group. A parent who has navigated special education services may be willing to mentor another parent. *Where are the places in your life that gives you an insight into places where others need help? What experiences can you share with others to minister to them?*

Saturday, May 22 – Sabbath

Pentecost Sunday, May 23

Acts 2:1-21

Thoughts for the Day: The Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples and makes them into the body of Christ – the Church! – and gives to them power to understand, to teach in many languages, and to heal. We, too, inherit this Spirit as Christians. *Worship with your congregation.*

Monday, May 24

Acts 2:37-47

Thoughts for the Day: In our baptism, we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. At this moment, we receive the Holy Spirit, making us the earthly Body of the Son, and, therefore, children of the Father. This empowers us to make a total change in what our lives look like. If we are living according to the Spirit, our lives should resemble how the apostles and early converts behaved right after Pentecost. *Does your church community behave like the believers did in Acts 2:37-47? How is it already similar? How would it need to change to more closely resemble it?*

Tuesday, May 25

John 16:4-15

Thoughts for the Day: When God the Son became incarnate as Jesus Christ, all of God was revealed in him. However, that doesn't mean our understanding of God is limited to the plain text of scripture. One of Christ's promises in John's Gospel is that through the Holy Spirit we will continue to be taught by God and our understanding will deepen. The Church, through creeds and dogmas, has used the inheritance of the Holy Spirit to interpret scripture and tradition. *How has your understanding of God changed since you were first introduced to the stories of scripture?*

Wednesday, May 26

Return to Sunday's scripture – Acts 2:1-21

Read the scripture out loud and sit quietly for 10 minutes to listen to what God might be whispering to your soul this week.

Thursday, May 27

Acts 10

Thoughts for the Day: The Holy Spirit (and, therefore, the Body of Christ that it constitutes) is not limited to the chosen people. All salvation comes through Christ (a child of Abraham), but it is extended to all peoples. Even a Roman Soldier – the same sort of people who literally nailed Jesus to the cross and had been oppressing God’s chosen people for decades – receives the Holy Spirit. None are rejected from the new nation that the Holy Spirit forms as God constitutes the Church. *Think about your congregation. Now think about all the people in your community: the families served by your schools, the people in your grocery stores. Does your church population reflect your community’s population? What sorts of people sit in your pews? Who is underrepresented or excluded?*

Friday, May 28

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Thoughts for the Day: Ezekiel connects God’s spirit dwelling within us with the gift of life. This means that when we think about life eternal, we shouldn’t understand it as something that begins *after* we die. Eternal life does not equal ‘life after death.’ Instead, our eternal life begins the moment we receive the Holy Spirit in baptism. Life eternal is a continuation of the life we are called to be living here and now – a life marked by God’s spirit in our heart and motivating our life. *Are you growing close to God now in the same way you hope to after death?*

Saturday, May 29 - Sabbath

Chapter 5. Their Dangerous Errors

Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

Chapter 6. Unbelievers In The Blood of Christ Shall Be Condemned

Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love;

no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty.

Chapter 7. Let Us Stand Aloof From Such Heretics

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it were better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again. It is fitting, therefore, that you should keep aloof from such persons, and not to speak of them either in private or in public, but to give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved. But avoid all divisions, as the beginning of evils.

Appendix II: Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*,
Chapter LX

BUT now behoveth to say a little more of this forthspreading, as I understand in the meaning of our Lord: how that we be brought again by the Motherhood of Mercy and Grace into our Nature's place, where that we were made by the Motherhood of Nature-Love: which Kindly-love, it never leaveth us.

Our Kind Mother, our Gracious Mother, for that He would all wholly become our Mother in all things, He took the Ground of His Works full low and full mildly in the Maiden's womb. (And that He shewed in the First [Shewing] where He brought that meek Maid afore the eye of mine understanding in the simple stature as she was when she conceived.) That is to say: our high God is sovereign Wisdom of all: in this low place He arrayed and dight Him full ready in our poor flesh, Himself to do the service and the office of Motherhood in all things.

The Mother's service is nearest, readiest, and surest: [nearest, for it is most of nature; readiest, for it is most of love; and surest] for it is most of truth. This office none might, nor could, nor ever should do to the full, but He alone. We know that all our mothers' bearing is [bearing of] us to pain and to dying: and what is this but that our Very Mother, Jesus, He -- All-Love -- beareth us to joy and to endless living? -- blessed may He be! Thus He sustaineth us within Himself in love; and travailed, unto the full time that He would suffer the sharpest throes and the most grievous pains that ever were or ever shall be; and died at the last. And when He had finished, and so borne us to bliss, yet might not all this make full content to His marvellous love; and that sheweth He in these high overpassing words of love: *If I might suffer more, I would suffer more.*

He might no more die, but He would not stint of working: wherefore then it behoveth Him to feed us; for the dearworthy love of Motherhood hath made Him debtor to us. The mother may give her child suck of her milk, but our precious Mother, Jesus, He may

feed us with Himself, and doeth it, full courteously and full tenderly, with the Blessed Sacrament that is precious food of my life; and with all the sweet Sacraments He sustaineth us full mercifully and graciously. And so meant He in this blessed word where that He said: *It is I that Holy Church preacheth thee and teacheth thee.* That is to say: *All the health and life of Sacraments, all the virtue and grace of my Word, all the Goodness that is ordained in Holy Church for thee, it is I.* The Mother may lay the child tenderly to her breast, but our tender Mother, Jesus, He may homely lead us into His blessed breast, by His sweet open side, and shew therein part of the Godhead and the joys of Heaven, with spiritual sureness of endless bliss. And that shewed He in the Tenth [Shewing], giving the same understanding in this sweet word where He saith: *Lo! how I loved thee;* looking unto [the Wound in] His side, rejoicing.

This fair lovely word *Mother*, it is so sweet and so close in Nature of itself that it may not verily be said of none but of *Him*; and to her that is very Mother of Him and of all. To the property of Motherhood belongeth natural love, wisdom, and knowing; and it is good: for though it be so that our bodily forthbringing be but little, low, and simple in regard of our spiritual forthbringing, yet it is He that doeth it in the creatures by whom that it is done. The Kindly, loving Mother that witteth and knoweth the need of her child, she keepeth it full tenderly, as the nature and condition of Motherhood will. And as it waxeth in age, she changeth her working, but not her love. And when it is waxen of more age, she suffereth that it be beaten in breaking down of vices, to make the child receive virtues and graces. This working, with all that be fair and good, our Lord doeth it in them by whom it is done: thus He is our Mother in Nature by the working of Grace in the lower part for love of the higher part. And He willeth that we know this: for He will have all our love fastened to Him. And in this I saw that all our duty that we owe, by God's bidding, to Fatherhood and Motherhood, for [reason of] God's Fatherhood and Motherhood is fulfilled in true loving of God; which blessed love Christ worketh in us. And this was shewed in all [the Revelations] and especially in the high plenteous words where He saith: *It is I that thou lovest.*

