

# Story and Meaning of Easter

Editor's note: Louis Casseles is a nationally-read reporter and writer on religious affairs. Among his best known work has been a series of reports on the great religions of the world, begun several years ago and still continuing. A newspaperman since 1942, he was graduated from Duke University. Casseles was honored in 1956 with the Christopher Award for his dispatch, "Christmas Story," and in 1955 he received the Faith and Freedom Award for outstanding coverage of religious news. Following is the first of five articles by Casseles on the story and meaning of Easter.

By LOUIS CASSELES  
UPI Correspondent

No period of human history has received more exhaustive scrutiny by scholars than the four days which began on the 13th of Nisan (April 6) in the year A.D. 30.

During those four days, in the city of Jerusalem, a young Jewish rabbi named Jesus of Nazareth was arrested, tried as a troublemaker, and put to death by Roman authorities.

Such executions were so commonplace in that era that the event would scarcely have rated a footnote in history except for one extraordinary circumstance.

The followers of Jesus, who had fled in panic at the time of his death, returned to Jerusalem a short while later and boldly proclaimed that he had risen from the dead.

**Very Love of God**

They said that he was the Christ, the very love of God incarnate in a human personality, and that by his life, death and resurrection he had opened to all men a way of escaping from the bonds of sinful self-centeredness and of entering into a new life as the forgiven sons of God.

Many people then, as now, found this "good news" hard to believe. But others found the Apostles' faith contagious, and after testing it in the laboratory of their lives, they too became convinced that Jesus "is living still" and that "through Him God is 'recon-

cing the world unto Himself."

So was born the Christian church.

**Memory Recorded**  
In due time, the church recorded its memory of Jesus' teachings, and particularly of the climactic events of His last week. The earliest writings, dating from about 51 A.D., were letters which the Apostle Paul wrote to various Christians congregations in Asia Minor. Mark's gospel was written about 70 A.D., possibly by one of Paul's young missionary assistants. Soon thereafter came the more detailed Gospel which bears the name of Matthew, and the two carefully-researched books written by the physician Luke, a gospel and an account of the Acts of the Apostles.

Scholars formerly thought that the fourth Gospel, which bears the name of John, must have been written much later. This conclusion was based on textual evidence which seemed to date the document sometime in the second or even the third century after Christ. But the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has put this evidence in a new light. It is now clear that the fourth Gospel could have been, and probably was, written in the first century.

These writings, preserved by the church as the New Testament, are the main source of information about the events of the first Easter. During the past century, they have been subjected to detailed and relentless research. Philologists, archaeologists, historians and theologians in hundreds have put literally every phrase of the New Testament to the test of critical inquiry, in an effort to distinguish authentic historical facts from any legendary coloring or metaphoric "height-

ening" that may have crept into the story as it was told and retold by the early Christians.

**Distressed Many**

This ruthlessly objective analysis has distressed many Christians, who look upon the Bible as the verbally-inspired Word of God, to be received on faith as literally true in every detail.

But to others, who had been unable to accept the Biblical record simply on the basis of "authority," the results of New Testament criticism are exciting and inspiring.

"The fact that the New Testament has been thrown open to the freest and most searching examination must be reckoned a great gain," says Prof. Ernest F. Scott of Union Theological Seminary.

**Examined More Strictly**

"The New Testament has

been examined more strictly than any other book. The main facts as to its origin have been verified on the fullest available evidence. Every possible doubt has been put forward and magnified. As a result of all this sifting, many of our old conceptions of the New Testament have been changed, but its claim has been established more surely than ever.

"We can now feel certain that the facts are set before us with essential fidelity."

In the next four dispatches the events which took place in Jerusalem during the middle of the month of Nisan in the year A.D. 30 will be retold, as the facts are recorded in the New Testament, with due regard for the light that has been shed on the record by modern scholarship.

(Tomorrow: The Betrayal.)

## Greatest Influx of Pilgrims Since 1948 Seen in Holy Week

Jerusalem - (UPI) - Preparations are completed in Jordan and Israel for what is hoped will be the greatest gathering of Holy Week pilgrims since the Palestine War of 1948.

The influx of pilgrims may inaugurate a new period of tourist prosperity after 10 years made lean by tension and strife, which has affected the economic life of this divided city.

**Rooms Sold Out**  
This year, every hotel room on both sides of no-man's-land between Jordan and Israel has been sold out for weeks.

Because of political tensions, some religious observances must, of necessity, be modified. For example, on Maundy Thursday afternoon, a token procession will visit the room of the Last Supper, which is on Mount Zion in the new Israel-held city of Jerusalem. Until the city was divided between Jordan and Israel, the procession used to include thousands. Since the division, only a token procession has been possible.

Following another Holy Land custom, 40 Franciscan monks will walk through the streets of the Old City to Simon the Just Gate (known as Mandelbaum Gate) and enter Israel. Once in the New City, they will board a bus and be driven several miles

to Mount Zion.

**No Direct Route**  
Another reminder of the political atmosphere is the fact that the distance from the Holy Sepulchre to Mount Zion is little more than half a mile. However, no direct route exists because of the division of the city. At the foot of the hill, another procession will form. It will consist of all those Christians who have not crossed into Jordan to celebrate Easter. Prayers will be said in the room of the Last Supper.

On Good Friday, thousands of pilgrims will pack the cobbled alleyways of Via Dolorosa - the Street of Sorrow - along which Christ carried His cross on the way to Calvary. Some pilgrims will carry crosses of their own.

**Pontifical High Mass**  
On Easter Sunday, Roman Catholics of many nations and from many walks of life will crowd into the rotunda of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre to attend a pontifical high mass with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Msgr. Alberto Gori. Others will attend quieter and less formal morning services in the Churches of St. Stephen and St. Xavier.

Protestants will attend early morning services in the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and the Anglican Cathedral of St. George.



**HOME DELIVERY**—Mrs. Virginia Smith, 33, of Los Angeles, gave birth to a son on the couch in her living room, because she didn't want to miss a TV program she was watching. Mrs. Smith said everything was fine, and that she intends to have more children the same way. She already has four other children and is a grandmother.

### Cancer Society Film Scheduled Tuesday

"Time and Two Women," an American Cancer society film showing how women can guard against uterine cancer, will be shown free tomorrow at 10 a.m. at the Holly theater, according to Mrs. C. B. Collins, local educational chairman for the Cancer society.

A panel of local physicians will answer questions at the close of the film. It will also be shown at 10 a.m. Wednesday at the Varsity theater, Ashland.

**OFFICER DIES**  
Stamford, Conn. - (UPI) - Dr. Lewis B. Franklin, 80, of Norton, Conn., treasurer of the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal church from 1920 to 1948, died Saturday in Stamford hospital after a three-month illness.

### Positions Available In Crater Lake Park

The civil service has announced examinations for various trades and crafts positions at Crater Lake National park. Positions include automotive mechanic helper, carpenter, building repairman, heavy duty mechanic, plumber and light duty truck driver. Interested persons may obtain applications at post office buildings and file them with the board of U. S. Civil Service examiners for the national park service, 180 New Montgomery St., San Francisco 5, Calif.

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### Grange News

Live Oak Grange

The visitation agate was on display at the last meeting of Live Oak Grange. Agriculture Chairman Ray Frantz reported that poultry prices are steady, beef better and hog market weak. Frank Hall and Foster Luce attended the hearing at the court house on the subdivision ordinance. Luce reported that more Grange members are now on the Jackson County Water Resources and Flood Control committee.

Ray Frantz, Frank Hall and Larry Sheehan were appointed to bring a report to the next meeting on various means of putting bumper barriers for cars on the parking lot.

It was reported that Pearl Lenderman is in the rest home at 120 Laurel st., Medford, and that Joe Golding also is ill.

A display table of old coins and collections was furnished by Fred Dengler, Beth Potter and Jessie Frantz. H. E. Cagan asked for shrubs which could be planted on HEC day.

Esther Fabric and Betty Frantz sang a duet during the program. Refreshments were served by the Earl Weavers and the Sheehans.

### 4-H Club News

Applegate Culinary Cuties

The Applegate Culinary Cuties met at the home of their leader, Mrs. Eugene Krouse, March 10 at 7 o'clock with eight members present. Sally Herriot gave a demonstration on cake baking. The money raising project was again discussed. The next meeting will be held March 24 at the leader's house. Susan Head, Reporter.

Sheep Club

Phoenix Sheep club held a regular meeting Sunday, March 15, at Mr. Swingle's home. The name of the club was discussed by the six members attending. Refreshments were served. The next meeting will be held April 19 at Swingle's home. Margaret Whillock, Reporter.

Thimble Thumbs

Sarah Robinson and Mary Ann Carnegie will give a demonstration on the next step in making garment protectors at the next meeting of the Thimble Thumbs sewing club March 21.

Members worked on their protectors at a meeting Feb. 21. Refreshments were served by the hostesses, Mrs. John Carnegie, and Mary Ann. Kathy Newcomb, Reporter.

Korny Kammers Outdoor Cooking Club

The Korny Kammers held their first meeting of the year recently at the home of Craig Wright, junior leader. We elected new officers. They are president, Linda Smith; vice president, Becky Gates; secretary, Jan Main; and reporter, Penny Sampert. The record books were handed out and the goals for the year were explained by project leader, Mrs. Hazel Wright.

Bryan Kellington, Ben Belknap, Patsie Eastman, and Helen McKee are to give demonstrations at the next meeting. Linda Smith and Craig Wright will give a special demonstration on reflection ovens and foil cooking. The next meeting will be held on March 28 at 10 a.m. at the home of Becky Gates. Penny Sampert, Reporter.

Stitch 'n Time

The Stitch 'n Time club met at the home of Joan Eslinger Saturday, March 15. Betsy Dunlevy and Joan Eslinger gave a demonstration entertainment. The next meeting will be at Mrs. Carringer's home and we will finish the club's stuffed toys. They are made with material, embroidery thread and nylon stockings. Joan Eslinger, Reporter.

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**WILLING TO NEGOTIATE** - President Eisenhower points to Berlin on a map of Germany just before addressing the American people over television and radio from the White House, regarding the Berlin crisis. During his speech the President expressed willingness to negotiate with Russia at a summit conference.

### Two Men Die as Car Leaves Road

The Dalles - (UPI) - Two men were killed near here late Saturday or early Sunday when their car careened off the highway and came to rest at the bottom of an embankment near railroad tracks.

The wreckage was spotted Sunday by the engineer of the Portland Rose streamliner, L. R. Price.

The victims were identified as Charles Franklin Pickard, 44, Beaverton and Perry P. Perkins, 62, Hillsboro. The accident occurred near Cecil.

### FORMER EDITOR DIES

New York - (UPI) - Raymond Henry McCaw, 72, former night managing editor of the New York Times, died Sunday in St. Elizabeth's hospital of virus pneumonia after a six-week illness.



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"Sure, looks are important... and my car will keep on looking good 'cause its finish is so bright and durable it never needs waxing."

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