



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

8 April 2020, 11:40 AM

Follow Jesus through the storm

At Before becoming bishop of Dubuque, I was bishop of Wichita, Kansas. While there, on 4 May 2007, an EF-5 tornado hit the little town of Greensburg, Kansas, population 1500 souls.

The tornado was 2 miles wide – wider than the town itself – and was on the ground for 30 minutes, with winds of 200 miles per hour.

When the storm finally ended, nothing was the same afterwards: people died, others were injured, and 95% of the town was completely destroyed.

But though things were different afterwards, they were also better, for the town rebuilt according to the highest environmental standards of the time – Greensburg went green!

There's a lesson there for us, in what we're going through now: storms happen, but they end, and life resumes, perhaps different than before, maybe even better.

There's a lesson there, too, for us as followers of Jesus in his Catholic Church.

What happened to Jesus that first Holy Week was like a storm, especially for his followers: they went home sad, despairing, not understanding Jesus' death, or what resurrection is.

But the storm passed, and once they understood Jesus' death and resurrection, life resumed, though different than what they were used to, and most certainly better.

Better, how? Better because, by the death and resurrection of Jesus:

- We are freed from slavery to sin and from the futility of suffering;
- And we know we're loved without strings attached and without bounds;
- And we know we'll enjoy eternal happiness, which comes from our desiring being quieted, which comes from our wants being fulfilled all at once, completely and forever, which comes from our perfect union with God.

The life of Jesus' followers is also different, because we live now, here, as if already united with God in heaven, living according to the mind and heart of God, which is modeled perfectly in the life of Jesus, and is memorialized in the Eucharist...

Where wheat is ground for bread, and grapes are crushed for wine – ground and crushed, but that’s okay, because that’s their fulfillment: they live to give to others.

And that’s our fulfillment as well: we live to give, and happy to do it! That’s the different, better life of those who follow Jesus through the storm, to risen life. Alleluia. Happy Easter.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque