

## **Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord / Year A / April 12, 2020 (Fr. Giese)**

Today, at a time when the world is eager for good news, we celebrate the event that is THE Good News for all time – Jesus is risen. Death is not the end of life. Jesus' resurrection after his death for us on the cross is the sign that we have been made by God for more than just this life. Jesus' resurrection is the revelation of the great love of God that we have not been made in His image to know the goodness of life only to lose it forever. Instead, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a demonstration of what God intends, what God desires, and what God offers to each one of us; resurrection to life in the fullness of his Kingdom and eternal happiness.

Jesus' resurrection is, as I said, the Good News for all time. It is also the very foundation of our Christian faith. All that we understand about Jesus, his actions, his words, and even his death on the cross is understood through his resurrection. Indeed, without his resurrection as the foundation of the Christian, faith what Jesus said and taught loses much of its force and his death on the cross, while heroic and tragic, would make no sense which is why Saint Paul said that the cross of Jesus was a stumbling block to some and an absurdity to others.

But Jesus' resurrection changes all that. His resurrection is the divine stamp of approval on all that Jesus said, taught, and did. His resurrection overwhelms the objections to the cross as an obstacle to faith or as an absurdity. Jesus' resurrection overwhelms even death itself which prompted Saint Paul, when speaking about our own resurrection, to write in 1 Corinthians 15:54-56 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

Yes, Jesus' resurrection is the good news of all time. It is the source of the consolation we need when we are faced with the loss of a loved one and it is the source of our hope when we bring ourselves to think about our own mortality.

But the resurrection of Jesus and the hope it affords us is not reserved for the times of loss. The resurrection of Jesus is for life. This life. You see, the resurrection of Jesus' human body did not occur on its own. The human body has no power to resurrect itself. What that means is that Jesus' body was raised and glorified by the power of God. Which means that there is no

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resurrection without God. There is no heaven without God. There is no life, really, apart from God.

Which brings us to baptism. When we are baptized we die to a life without God and we rise to a life with God. Eternal life, therefore, begins, not when this body gives way but when we are baptized because we are baptized into the death of Jesus and rise with him to life with God. This life with God is repaired when we confess our sins which are those moments of life without the goodness of God. The eternal life begun at baptism is fortified by the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. It is strengthened by the Eucharist, and it weighs heavily on my heart not to nourish you with Holy Communion this blessed day when you are longing for him in your own heart.

The point is that we do not have one life now and another life with God when this one is over. We have one life with God. And those who are willing to love God above all things, now, and their neighbor as they love themselves, now, are not far from the reign of God, even now.

The resurrection of Jesus is our blessed hope. It is a consolation. It is a revelation of God's intentions. It is the foundation of our faith. It is the reason we are baptized. It is something we begin to live even now. And it is one more thing. It is a lesson for our time. As we, and all the world struggle with the effects of the Corona virus, we long to go back to the life we were leading a few weeks ago. None of us wants to live with the threat of illness, reports of death, and shortages of vital goods. None of us wants to live with things closed, social distancing, people out of work, and children at home when they should be at school. None of us wants to keep doing things remotely, including attending Mass. We want to return to life as we knew it and that is certainly understandable. But here again, the resurrection of Jesus, teaches us. Jesus' body was resurrected, not revived and not resuscitated. His resurrected body was not the same as before. In his resurrection Jesus' body was glorified and unlimited and filled with the Spirit and the power of his divinity.

So, should it be for us now. While it may be in our current nature to want to go back to what we knew before, like the Hebrew people when they grew tired of eating manna in the desert, complaining to Moses "We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost – also the

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cucumbers, the melons, leeks, and onions, and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna.”

Yes, there are many things we miss, but simply going back would be a great loss, if we lose what we have gained; the patience, forbearance, strength, and charity. It would be a loss if we lose sight of the opportunities, we have every day to be neighbor to those in need, to comfort the stressed and frightened, to give witness to our faith in a time of hardship, and to make of the home a true domestic church. It would be a loss to lose the intensity of our prayers, the willingness to make sacrifices, and our hunger for communion with Jesus in his body and blood. None of that should be lost.

We should instead, with the resurrection of Jesus in mind, be determined when this crisis has passed, to rise to a new life in Christ, one filled with greater faith, increased hope, and a zeal for charity for all the world to see, and believe for they are signs of our faith in the resurrection of Jesus – The Good News for all time.