

SOLEMNITY OF EASTER
Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Ps 118; Col 3:1-4; Jn 20:1-9
April 17, 2022
Fr. David Pignato

It is the hope of Holy Mother Church that Easter morning will bring great joy to the hearts of her children. As we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, we are reminded that the sufferings and sorrows of this life do not have the last word – not for those who believe in Christ and live as He taught. The Resurrection of Christ from the grave reveals to us that there *is* life after death, and it is a life of glory and freedom from suffering, for those who follow Christ.

During the days of Lent, and especially during the last few days of the Triduum, we recalled with sadness all the opposition Christ faced and all that He suffered to free us from sin. We also renewed our sorrow for our own sins, which we know caused Our Lord's Passion. But now, the sadness of Lent gives way to the joy of Easter, because now we know that God offers to forgive our sins and invites us to live with Him forever, if we are faithful. As one of the famous hymns for Easter sings:

*The strife is o'er, the battle done;
now is the victor's triumph won!
O let the song of praise be sung: Alleluia!*

And as the Easter Sequence sings, "*Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous: The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.*" Yes, Easter is the celebration of Christ's victory over sin, suffering and death, and it gives us the joy and hope that we also can triumph over the sufferings in our lives.

As a result of the Resurrection, the hope of eternal life has dawned upon the world. And we need this hope for Heaven throughout our lives. The hope that the Resurrection gives can color and define our lives. It can orient us and point us in the right direction. And it can sustain us in difficult times.

For example, when we face or see injustice in the world, the Resurrection reminds us that God will put things right. When we suffer from physical pain, the Resurrection reminds us that it will come to an end. When we experience deep sorrow or tragedy, the Resurrection reminds us that there is relief and happiness to come. If we feel weighed down by guilt and think that God cannot forgive us, the Resurrection reminds us that God's mercy has been unleashed from Heaven. And

when we struggle to understand why God allows evil, even in ourselves, the Resurrection of Christ reminds us that God allows it only because He plans to bring a greater good from it. For, “[f]rom the greatest moral evil ever committed – the rejection and murder of God’s only Son, caused by the sins of all men – God, by his grace that ‘abounded all the more,’ [Rom 5:20] brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption” (*Catechism*, 312).

This Easter, we can appreciate the difference that the Resurrection makes, when we think of the poor victims of the war in Ukraine. Many of them never imagined that this could happen to them in the 21st century. Their situation is bleak, and for those who have lost loved-ones, it has already changed the rest of their lives here on earth. But the Resurrection of Christ from the dead gives them hope that even this terrible war has not changed their lives *forever*. This is because faith in Christ gives hope that we will see our loved-ones again, as we pray at every funeral Mass. The Resurrection is what gives hope to these victims of war. In fact, there are news reports of billboards in Ukraine which say, “Our only hope is God.”

In other words, the Resurrection of Christ that we celebrate today on Easter and on every Sunday changes everything. It re-adjusts the horizons of our existence and expands the possibilities of our hope. It confirms the instinct of our immortal souls that there is more than this earthly life, that there is another whole dimension of life waiting for us beyond the grave. The Resurrection tells us to “*seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,*” to “[*t*]hink of what is above, not of what is on earth,” as we heard from St. Paul in the second reading.

And all of this is possible because Jesus persevered in His determination to redeem us by obeying His Father and offering His life for us on the Cross. The truth and the celebration of Easter reminds us of all the good that can come, for ourselves and for others, when we are obedient and faithful to God. When we choose *not* to be faithful, we deny ourselves the peace and security that faith can bring. But when we are faithful to Christ and His teachings, we have every right to live this life with hope for Heaven, and that changes everything.