

## From The Pastor

Resurrection is the fulfillment of hope, fired by faith that persists in trust through the darkest hour. The light of Resurrection is known only through the dark hour of death. In this light, the darkness of death has lost its power, and can no longer cast its long shadow of fear.

The One who was dead is now alive. He who has accepted the long night of death has broken its chains of deception and fear. The light of love is not a light that can be dispelled by the darkness of death. In the light of God's Christ, no death is final.

Followers of Christ, People of God: He is Risen. Lift your heads, open your eyes and proclaim with all you heart: Christ who has died is now risen. The risen life of the Son is bestowed on all who believe and follow him to new life. Our fear of death, in all its forms, has been reconciled by the dying and rising of Jesus. Now, our lives can be, and are called to be profoundly different because of the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Words can never satisfy or capture the reality of the Resurrection of Jesus. It must first be professed in faith. In a stance of faith, experience will reveal the fulfillment of hope through the dark times of life. To know Resurrection and all that it promises, is to first know the death and dark nights of loss that are inevitable in life. The mystery of new life is tangled up in the mystery and fear that comes with the loss and brokenness of life. For those who face such losses with the courage of faith, new life is much easier to see and embrace.

Jesus knew and accepted this reality. For him it was the dark night of the Cross. But as we have just celebrated in these last three days of the Triduum, the dark night of death for Jesus was more than three hours on a coarse plank of wood. The three days of the Lord's passion and death encompass the whole of his experience. Jesus entered into the darkest nights known to the human experience so that through his faith and trust in the Father's love, we too could be free, not only from sin, but from the fears that cause us to resist the kind of deaths that bring us new life.

The experience of the Cross for Jesus, in both his human and divine self, was the experience of abandonment by his friends, the inner loneliness of rejection, the dejection of failure, and the felt absence of the Father's love. The broken body of Jesus on the Cross reflects a man wounded and broken in spirit because he was willing to reveal the truth of a love that cannot be killed. The whole experience of human brokenness and all the woundedness that happens to human persons can be seen in the crucifixion and death of Jesus. In the grip of all human sin, Jesus defeats the evil and the lie of sin, as well as the fear that sin and death evoke in us. This is the new life of the Resurrection.

How can I come to know this freedom from fear in my own life? The answer is as easy as faith, and as difficult as it is to live that faith in the face of trials. To accept the joy and promise of the Resurrection is to accept the reality of pain and woundedness that characterizes our human experience. The lie is to think that we are somehow in control and immune to the hurts and evils of life. Many people live from such a place, denying the reality of evil and brokenness in the human condition, especially in them self, until it hits home in such a way that it must be faced.

The most grateful followers of Jesus are those sinners who have felt the hand of his mercy. Sin is often a symptom of underlying pain and hidden hurt. Forgiveness heals the actions of bad behavior; mercy heals the underlying root cause that provokes the behavior.

The ability to know the power of the Resurrection lies in our openness to the healing power of the divine mercy in its forgiving love. Can we, will we allow God to love us? Will we allow the divine mercy to change our hearts and free us from all that binds us? These are the words of faith that have to face the wounds and brokenness of life with a courage and a trust that finds new life. The dark night of pain lived in the stance of faith will promise new gateways to hope. Jesus faced the Cross with deep trust in his Father's love, not with a clear vision or understanding of what he would be three days later. The Father did not fail his trust. The fire of divine love in the power of the Holy Spirit transformed the dead body of Jesus into the risen, glorified Christ. The ultimate self-giving death is rewarded with the ultimate promise of new life: restoration to the Father's love in perfect unity and glory.

The work of God accomplished in Jesus has opened a door for us, and shown us a path. The greatest challenge we have as Christians is to believe in God's love for us, even in the midst of our sin and human brokenness. In Jesus, all sin is forgiven, fear of death has been defeated, and the path to peace has been paved. This is your new life in Christ. Let God love you into a new way of being free and whole. That would surely please God to know that you have allowed his love to make a difference for you.

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