

Easter Sunday  
April 4, 2021  
“Death: A Doorway”

Acts 10:34...43  
Col 3:1-4  
Jn 20:1-9

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Death is something that we all have to face many times throughout the course of our life. Experiencing the death of friends or loved ones is always difficult. And we must face our own death when it, finally, comes. Death is something we resist in those we love because it means that they will no longer be with us. We resist our own death because we know it will be the end of life as we know it. Moreover, although life might be hard – it is also filled with wonderful people and satisfying things!

Unfortunately, many people refuse to accept death even when it is imminent. They will use every means to prolong their own life – or that of a loved one – no matter what the cost.

However, there are others who have an entirely different focus and direction. When faced with a terminal illness, they do nothing to prolong their life or extend their time. They accept death with equanimity, because they believe in something more. They know something more!

They know that their life here is not all that there is for them – They know that there is a new and far richer life after death. They know that the meaning of Easter is a promise that we will live forever in a new and marvelous world of freedom, joy, and peace – a world without suffering and pain – a world, actually, beyond our wildest dreams! However, there was no indication of this life until Jesus rose from the dead over 2000 years ago!

The disciples of Jesus never expected the Resurrection. They could not believe that Jesus would die the way he did – for he was crucified like the worst of criminals and in seeming disgrace! They did not take seriously the statement of Jesus that he would be delivered over to the Romans, be put to death, and then rise on the third day.

Consequently, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early on the third day with spices to complete a proper burial for the body of Jesus. When the stone was already rolled back, she presumed that someone had stolen the body.

When alerted, Peter and John ran to the tomb – and there discovered an extraordinary thing. The body of Jesus was gone, but the wrappings were still there. Then John realized that Jesus, himself, had removed the wrappings and was, somehow, alive!

Jesus was alive – Yet he was alive in a way that they could never have foreseen or imagined. He was no longer bound by space or time. He was no longer limited by his materiality. He could appear out of nowhere and still eat and drink with them as before!

Peter tells us in the first reading from Acts that many people experienced the reality of the risen Jesus. However, it was only those who had faith – only those who were truly open to God – only those who had changed their lives and had become disciples – who had become true believers and followers – before his death.

Brothers and Sisters, there are always good and serious reasons to resist our own death and preserve our life. We have obligations to family and loved ones. We have commitments we have made and promises to fulfill. Nevertheless, when God calls us from this life, it is always the best time – because it is His time. Moreover, we will make it easier for others – and find great peace ourselves – if we remember why God created us and why Jesus rose from the dead.

God created us out of love, because He wanted us to share His goodness and His glory. Jesus rose from the dead to make God's goodness and glory apparent – to make it believable and undeniable. God created us to help others on their journey and to make what Jesus taught meaningful by our lives. Jesus rose to prove that his words were true, his claims valid, and his promises a reality. God sent us Jesus so that we could learn how to live as children of God. God sent Jesus to make amends for our sins in a divine way that only His Son could accomplish for us. God sent Jesus to teach us that our life here is but a preparation for an eternal life to which we are called.

Jesus rose so that his risen presence would be with us in so many ways – until the end of time. He rose to assure us that God will provide for our loved ones after our death – if we live in faith and trust in the here and now.

So, let us resolve to live every moment of our life here, knowing that we are in God's hands – that Jesus truly walks with us – and that death is but the doorway to eternal life for each of us, as it was for Jesus!

Amen.

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