

Living the Spirit – Easter

This is a former Easter message. I think it is another way for us to rejoice that we have received the gift of Jesus in our lives, the gift of abundant life, forgiveness and salvation. I have not changed anything. It is a reminder of past prayers not do so.

Our insert today will not repeat those reflections given in the past. However, we cannot omit some general reflections that inspire our renewed commitment our faith. If you are like me, you received your faith from the start of your life. Long before you knew what Easter means as an article of our faith, a teaching that is indispensable, you accepted that Easter is a special day, a special time.

Today parents struggle against heavy odds to give their children the same faith. Perhaps they themselves have not received the full catechesis that was previously so common in the Church. In other churches there is a constant downplaying of the mystery of the resurrection. Some leaders of these churches, and sadly a few of our own theologians, confront the mystery by trying to humanize what cannot be known by our science.

Easter is a time for faith. We should accept that we have a duty to grow in our understanding of its teachings. We should see our Easter customs as having clear connections to spiritual reality. In the past I noted some of these. We have Easter eggs. Eggs are a symbol of how the chick breaks through the shell, just as Jesus came from the tomb. From inside out!

Flowers and new clothes symbolize beauty of the resurrection mystery, and its ability to change us, and make us new again in the eyes of God. As soon as God created He saw his creation as good. Easter suggests that if we celebrate Easter with renewal of our spiritual lives, he can again see us as new. Children whose baptism has made us His beloved sons and daughters.

Easter has its songs of joy. *Alleluia* is sung with joy and almost with abandon. This means simply *Praise God!* In Acts we read what St. Peter said to those in Jerusalem on Pentecost:

“Praised be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us new birth; a birth unto hope which draws its life from the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.”

St. Peter goes on to say:

“ There is cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials; but this is so your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ appears. Although you have never seen him, you love him, and without seeing him you now believe in him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory because you are achieving faith’s goal, your salvation.”

Does not this passage from Acts in our Bible give us food for Easter reflection? Just dwell on words like faith, salvation, joy, hope and mercy. Easter seems to me to combine all these things and more. They make our life a life in the Spirit. This can happen only if we permit God’s will to be accomplished for each one of us.

Perhaps it will be well to ask ourselves which of these we need most of all to consider at this season of our liturgical year. I do want you to know that all of them connect with that special gift of the Eucharist that Jesus gives his Church, his people. I must leave it to you to make the most of your Easter Communion. I do remind you that the Church rightly commands you to do your best to receive Communion at this time of the year. Of course, this means with grace of soul. Those who cannot receive this Sacrament can certainly make a spiritual communion that will bring them the ultimate mercy of God, who alone can judge the life of the Spirit within his children.

Let me conclude here with the Intercessions found on Easter Day at Morning Prayer. Try to make them truly your own in union with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

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Christ is the Lord of life, raised up by the Father; in his turn he will raise us up by his power.

Let us pray to Him, saying, *Christ our life, save us.*

Lord Jesus, light shining in the darkness, you lead your people into life, and give our mortal nature the gift of holiness, -- may we spend this day in praise of your glory.

Lord, you walked the way of suffering and crucifixion, -- may we suffer and die with you, and rise again to share your glory.

Son of the Father, our master and our brother, you have made us a kingdom of priests for our God, -- may we offer you our joyful sacrifice of praise.

King of glory, we look forward to the great day of your coming in splendor, -- that we may see your face to face, and be transformed into your likeness.”

God our Father, creator of all,
today is the day of Easter joy.
This is the morning on which the Lord appeared to men
who had begun to lose hope
and opened their eyes to what the scriptures foretold:
that first he must die, and then would rise
and ascend into his Father's glorious presence.
May the risen Lord
breathe on our minds and open our eyes
that we may know him in the breaking of bread,
and follow him in his risen life.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

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At this time of year it is customary to wish all of those connected with our parish our very best wishes for joy and happiness. To pray for them, where there is need for strength and courage to face serious problems. To remember all our departed loved ones, praying that they now enjoy the reward of their goodness to us. That is what our entire Staff wishes for you. Happy Easter! Christ is risen, Alleluia! Christ is truly risen. Alleluia!

To each of you we extend our blessing:

“May Almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Monsignor Sacks, Father Cletus and Monsignor Morrison

Please pray for priests. We surely need your prayerful support.