

Easter Message 2018

Discovering Easter Joy

While sharing a conversation with a friend recently, he mentioned that he finds it difficult to see any joy in the world today. The news always seems negative, stories are always about tragedies, and we are stunned by shootings in schools, the difficulties of war and the poverty and anguish that so many people endure, especially the immigrants and refugees who are just seeking a safe place for their families to live in peace.

I mentioned that Easter is to be a time of joy, since it celebrates the victory over sin and death that the Lord Jesus has won for us. I suggested that he seek some joy in volunteering in an outreach program to assist the poor and needy of our community and he thought that might be interesting. He started by helping out in a ministry that provides clothing and small home articles to the poor. He said that in helping in this way, he felt his faith was really doing something positive to change the lives of people. I encouraged him, saying there are many ways we can celebrate our faith, especially in good works to the needy and the marginalized.

He recalled how in helping others, he found a sense of joy in his heart that was missing in his daily life, and also a greater sense of purpose for his own life. He realized that the Lord can direct and influence us to use our time and our talents, especially in helping others, and this can be a sign of joy and goodness in our world and for each of us in our lives.

The Easter story, so familiar to us all, is about life and sharing. Jesus through his suffering, death and resurrection, won eternal life for us and shares his life with us through faith. As we gather in many ways this Easter, as faith communities, as families and as neighbours, let us give thanks for the abundance that we share. Let us consider how we can show gratitude for our many gifts in our outreach to the poor and to the marginalized of our society. Let us demonstrate that we can help make a difference in someone's life through our actions of charity or generosity and in giving some time to organizations that reach out to the poor and homeless of our community. In doing so we will find some of that joy which is so needed in our lives and seemingly so lacking in our world today.

The entrance antiphon for our Easter morning Mass reads: "I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia. You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia. Too wonderful for me, this knowledge, alleluia, alleluia." Easter is a feast of wonder and of joy, and it is visible in the good works and outreach that people share for this feast. It is a spiritual time and a time to ask the Lord to help us see His presence in our lives and in the things that we do. Easter proclaims life and strength, even in the midst of sadness and struggle. This is what Easter joy is about, and it can be within us through our prayer, our sharing and our loving concern for one another.

As we celebrate this great feast, let us remember that Christ has won for us a share in his eternal life. And this should touch our hearts with joy and goodness - so much so, that we share this with one another, especially through out acts of kindness and generosity. A Happy and Holy Easter to all!

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