

Easter Sunday 2019 SML

As Catholics sing our Alleluias, in token of the Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord, there is one great thought to be kept in mind, and that is, what we call life is only really death. The “only” life is the life of the Risen Lord.

What we call life is the temporary of vital forces which:

- ✓ animates our body,
- ✓ sees in our eyes,
- ✓ hears in our ears
- ✓ and thrills in our hearts.

Death is its opposite – the cessation of all of these processes which make living living. Death:

- ✓ stiffens the body,
- ✓ closes the eyes,
- ✓ stops up the ears
- ✓ and muffles the heart.

That is what we call death.

The narrow minds of unbelievers, and the contemporary believers of Jesus’ day, applied this narrow concept to the divine person of Jesus Christ. They thought Christ’s life ended in death. And when death had come and life had gone, back to

their nets and back to their boats they went. Three years earlier, Our Blessed Lord had called them away from fishing to be fishers of men. But now that death had come and life had gone, they would once more become fishers of fish.

For the One they had hoped would restore the throne of David

- ✓ had died on a peg,
- ✓ with only thorns for a crown,
- ✓ nails for a scepter
- ✓ and His own Blood for royal purple.

There was only one way to describe what had happened, a human word with a human attitude. Christ is dead. And if Christ was God, or Christ is God, well then, God is dead!

The tremendous lesson of the Resurrection that every follower of Christ would understand until the end of the world, the lesson that meant unlearning all the wisdom the world had ever taught and will ever teach, and that lesson still thrills our hearts today. It was not Christ who died. It was sin!

Once the Apostles realized this, once they realized that He who was dead – lives. They went out to have their throats cut in testimony to the fact that it was not Christ who died. It was sin!

The years turned into history, but the same antiphon was sung from the hearts of every age. Each age repeated in its own way that it was not Christ who died, it was sin – so that no generation ever since was without the tidings of the resurrection victory.

First century Rome. Nero published his famous edict: “Let there be no Christians!” And his successors, with no fear of God to restrain their cruelty, and a great army to administer it, set to work to destroy the Gospel of Our Risen Lord. The swords of executioners went dull with slaughter. The wild beasts had their fill of Christian flesh and the river of the Tiber ran red with Christian blood. A thousand times from a thousand throats came the cry: “The Christians must die.” A thousand times from a thousand thumbs turned down to signal “The Christians must die.” And when the day finally came when Rome thought there would not be another hand to make the sign of the Cross or another tongue that would speak the name of Jesus. What came about? It was not Christianity that died. It was the Roman Empire. It was not Christ who died. It was sin!

Come closer to our times and see Easter proclaiming its lesson yet again. Man is divorced from God. Every sacred truth taught by the Church, from the Incarnation, to the Virgin Birth,

to the Real Presence, to the Resurrection was presumed to be dissolved by the modern thinker; that every moral way of life from chastity to the sacredness of marriage and the sacredness of human life, that these Sacred Truths should bow to inclusivity and diversity, that I'm OK, you're OK:

- ✓ Reduces God to a mental symbol and explained away psychologically
- ✓ Reduces Man to an animal and explained away biologically
- ✓ Reduces Life to whim and explained away by "someone's" right to choose because "someone" made a "mistake;"
- ✓ Reduces the Supernatural to the superstitious
- ✓ Reduces the Mystical to the mystified . . .

The lesson of Easter will show that men have failed, that government has failed, that institutions have failed . . . and the only thing that has not failed is the Church, and her unwaivering loyalty to the Resurrection of Our Divine Lord. The Alleluia Antiphon of Easter rings again, and the lesson learned by the Apostles, by Christ's contemporaries, is taught once again. It was not Christ who died. It was sin!

In a few minutes, you will renew your Baptismal promises, where you will claim that for you, as a Christian, sin has died.

Really? Really? Well before you make such a bold statement of faith, or a bold face lie, enter into your own personal life.

Enter into your own personal life, where you have heard the voice of the Risen Lord calling to your own heart, beckoning you to His Way, His Truth and His Life. In a moment of silence, perhaps, He whispered to you that He is the Truth proclaimed in the Mass. In an uneasy conscience, He whispered to you to go to confession. In a passing prayer, He called you to greater prayerfulness. In tossing a few bucks in the collection basket, He called you to roll up your sleeves and do His work.

Because in each scenario, it is decision time.

Lose everything or find Everything?

Go to the grave or walk in newness of Life?

Remain in the dark or come to the Light?

Those of us who have accepted the Truth in the Mass; those of us who have confessed our sins to a priest; those of us who have taken the next step in our spiritual lives; those of us who roll up our sleeves for Jesus Christ, are ready to renew our baptismal vows. We are ready to sing an Alleluia this Easter night (morning). Because the age old lesson learned by

the Apostles has now become a no brainer. It was not Christ who died. It was sin!