

2018

- A very joyous and blessed Easter to all—the most sacred day of the Christian year as we celebrate the very cause of our joy: the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ on the third day after His death by crucifixion 2000-ish years ago.
- All Christian voices ring out all over the world this evening: “*Alleluia, The Lord is risen!*”—the word “*Alleluia*” from the Hebrew “*hallelu-jah*”, meaning “*Praise God*”—as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
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- Why such joy? Because Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of the one eternal God, and came to the world to: 1) teach us the perfect way to live in loving God and neighbor; 2) died to “correct” the “imbalance” in the absolute and perfect divine justice caused by the transgressions (sins) against God and our fellow Man; and 3) rose from the dead to open the way to eternal life with God for all who accept Him as best they know how and follow virtue—virtue which attains perfection via His teaching and example, bolstered by God’s assisting grace.
- This is why both St. Paul and St. John describe Jesus as the “*firstborn from the dead*” (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5)—the trailblazer, as it were, whom we are called to follow in God’s grace by fidelity to Him.
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- Holy Thursday we had the commemoration of the Lord’s Supper—the Last Supper of Jesus with His apostles—in which Jesus: 1) instituted the Eucharist—His Body and Blood from bread and wine—to remain with us ‘til His second coming.
- That night, to “confect” the Eucharist through all those generations and to offer the Eucharist as a participation in His own sacrifice, Jesus instituted the priesthood in the first bishops—the apostles.
- This priesthood has been passed on from then until now—a line of ordination stretching from Jesus Himself to every Catholic priest, from then ‘til now, via the modern apostles—the bishops.

2018

- And, on Holy Thursday, Jesus gave us most adamantly the mandate of humble service of one another in the recounting of His washing of His—the Master’s—washing of His disciples—His students’—feet.
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 - Then, of course yesterday...the recounting of His Passion and death—the agony in the garden, His arrest and mock trial...the sweaty, bloody scourging...the carrying of the cross...the crucifixion—the crucifixion which is offered to correct that imbalance of divine and infinite justice...a correction that we could not possibly make by our own efforts, and yet is given so freely by Jesus to all who accept Him as Savior and follow Him.
 - All of that...done for no other reason than God’s love for each of you...and thus offered for each of you individually.
 - His was...and IS...a true love without boundaries...a love which saved nothing for Himself, even to the sacrifice of His very life that we might be given opportunity to be saved from the eternal consequences of sin, and come to eternal life with God.

 - And now, with His resurrection, Jesus becomes the “*first-born from the dead*”, and we are called to follow, for by His death and resurrection Heaven is open to all who seek Him...all who seek to follow Him.
 - As we read in John’s Gospel: “*...to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...*” (John 1:12)
 - This is why tonight we rejoice especially in those coming forward for baptism...and in our baptized candidates coming forth to ask full communion in our Catholic faith.
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- Yes, as St. John writes: “*Jesus Christ [is] the first-born of the dead...*” and St. Peter says of His faithful: “*...you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you*

2018

may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

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- So, truly, “*hallelujah*”!... “Praise God!”...for in the Resurrection there is only sweetness.
- The faithful Christian realizes that sorrows and pains on this earth are temporary annoyances, for God’s love and salvation is, literally, forever.
- For the faithful Christian tonight there is no sorrow; only the knowledge and joy of the empty tomb and the Risen Christ...who has opened the doors not only for eternal existence, but for eternal life and happiness.
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- And so, tonight we sing with the psalmist and with faithful Christians all over the world: “*One thing have I asked of the LORD, this I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD... (Psalm 27:4)... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*” (Psalm 23:6-1)