

“He is truly Risen, Alleluia!”

The night of all nights, the Feast of all feasts, the resurrection of the Lord is the *completion and culmination* of Paschal triduum. The risen Christ is the corner stone and foundation of our faith. If original ‘*Pasqua*’ meant the passage from slavery to freedom, the new Pascua means passage from death to new life. Today we wish: Happy Easter! ‘*Easter*’, word coming from the Anglo-Saxon fertility Goddess named *Oestera*, originally meant, “feast of new flower”; it has turned to be “*feast of new life*”. St. Peter states in (Acts 2:24), “Jesus, *whom you have hanged on the cross, God raised him up*”; whom the world chastised and rejected, God raised him up and gave him the name above every other name.

Friends, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, we should all go home and forget about it. As St. Paul himself puts it: “If Jesus is not risen from the dead, our preaching is in vain and your faith is meaningless; we are the most pitiable of men.” If Jesus was not risen from the dead, Christianity is all a fraud, a joke. But, friends, if he did rise from the dead, then he must be the absolute center of our lives. Because it is the hinge upon which everything turns. There is no other option! The resurrection shows that Christ alone can gather back to the Father everyone whom he has embraced through his suffering love.

Friends, if Jesus is risen from the dead, this world, the world as we know, is not all that there is. Every living thing in this world comes into being and then passes away; dies forever. In Jesus case, death wasn’t the final word. God’s power raised him from the bondage of death once and for all. The R. of Jesus from dead tells us as definitively as possible, that God is up to something greater than any of us can possibly imagine. Therefore, we don’t have to live as if death is our master! (Death, where is your victory? St. Paul)

Even today’s world is fascinated by the Epicurean philosophy: Eat, drink, make merry and enjoy life, for you are not sure about tomorrow, or about the world beyond: If everything was over with the tomb, what is the difference between the animals and the human beings? We are created in the *image and likeness of God*. What does it mean to be created in the

image of God? *The **image of God** refers to the immaterial part of man, that enables him to commune with his Creator. We humans are created, not simply to pass time by seeking sensual pleasures, and whatever benefits the body. The resurrection of Jesus brings new meaning and light to human existence, as well as human suffering.*

What is the message of Easter, if not hope, hope of our own resurrection, not just at the end of life, **but here and now**. *Sometimes in our life, we may experience 'the death of the heart' even before we die, while we are still in this life. It is like a state of a total absence of energy, loss of hope to fight and to live as if our 'heart is dead'. We also may see every day around us, many who are 'dead at heart', due to a failed marriage, unexpected sickness, death of someone dear, loss of job, financial crisis, broken friendship. The risen Lord is inviting us to come out of the darkness of our tombs, darkness of despair, anger, anxiety, fear and resentment and to rise with him. We, need to rise with Christ in His resurrection and rejoice in his victory. Empowered by the 'spirit of resurrection', as disciples of Christ, let us be instruments of 'resurrection for others', as extend our hands and our hearts, to "raise those dead at heart.", by raising their heart to hope.*

The real question is, are you willing to allow Jesus into your hearts to renew you or are you going to flow with the current of the secular culture? Today, Jesus wants to give you and me a *new identity, a new beginning, a fresh start*: he has washed away our sins in his blood and forgiven them. His resurrection has illuminated our life and brought us new hope.

The only signs, left on the risen body of Christ-symbolized in this Paschal candle- are the marks of five wounds. They are the link that connect us with Jesus. He was wounded for me, he took upon himself my pains.

Through *his* wounds, I am healed. Friends, the true joy of Easter consists in walking in the newness of life. Therefore, renewed in our mind, let us put on the new self. The conviction of faith and the joy of Easter offers us, a genuine sense of one's own worth as a child of God, created in His image and redeemed by the love of Jesus Christ. We have faith in God, our Lord is truly risen! Alleluia! Let the Peace of the risen Lord be with you, today and always. Amen. Happy Easter!