

So this morning I saw this meme on Facebook and I thought it was pretty insightful for the meaning of today. It had Satan saying: “Jesus is finally dead!” And then there’s a picture of Jesus stepping out of the tomb saying, “April Fools!” And by the way, I’m probably the most gullible priest in this diocese, so I usually hate April Fools’ Day with a passion, just sayin. However, I do think it’s ironic that today being Easter, just also happens to be April Fools’ Day. Because if you think about April Fools’ Day in the context of Easter and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, you can come to some important conclusions.

First of all, the Resurrection of Christ *itself* is not some bad “April Fools’ joke”—but rather it *really, truly happened and there’s overwhelming evidence proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the Resurrection of Christ did indeed happen!* In fact, what we celebrate today is truly the greatest, most epic, and consequential event in human history! Brothers and sisters, our Catholic faith isn’t rooted in fictional, popular folklore or abstract, “nice-sounding fairy tales”—rather our faith is rooted in objective history—in actual events that took place within space and time involving real people and many eyewitnesses. I’m most

especially referring to the saving events surrounding the life of Jesus of Nazareth, events that are recorded in the Gospels. In fact, today's Gospel account of the Resurrection from John has all of the hallmarks of an eyewitness account given that it includes specific, unique, and seemingly random details that could only be recalled by an eyewitness who actually experienced the event firsthand.

So in order to truly understand the nature of the historical event we're celebrating today, let's return to that corny meme on Facebook that I referred to in the beginning of my homily. In the context of April Fools' Day, one could say that the "prank" or the "joke" is *not* the Resurrection itself, but rather this notion that sin and death are more powerful than God because of what happened to Jesus on Good Friday—this *laughable* notion that evil is more powerful than God—this notion that death is the end for those who faithfully follow Christ! ***That's the joke!*** And what a terrible joke it really is!

In the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, the only fool who "got played" in this whole thing is the devil, who thought that he could defeat Christ in the end by throwing the "kitchen sink at Him" and

overwhelming Jesus with all of the sins and evil of the world. And yet *in Christ*, God's infinite love, mercy, and goodness overcame *all of it*—all of the disgusting evil that was thrown at Him. In the Resurrection of Christ, *God gets the “last word and the last laugh”* over death and all of the evil in the world.

In fact, St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians says something very similar along these lines when he rejoices in the Resurrection of Christ exclaiming, “*Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?*...thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The victory of Christ's Resurrection at Easter reminds us that in the end, good will *always* triumph over evil and that there's *absolutely no equality* between God and Satan, but that God is *infinitely more powerful* than all the destructive forces of evil, which threaten and endanger all that is true, good, and beautiful within creation.

So then what does the Resurrection of Christ at Easter *practically mean for my life?! Why should I care at all about Easter?!* Well brothers and sisters, out of His infinite and perfect love for you and for

me, our Lord Jesus died and rose from the dead in order to save us from sin and death—and we shouldn't understand that as some “abstract, unknowable thing” but rather, our Lord Jesus died and rose to save us from *our own sins* and *our own death!* So I have no idea when I'll die or how I'll die, but what I *do know with the greatest certainty* is that I don't have to be afraid of my future death because Christ has *already* conquered it and opened up the pathway for me to eternal life and happiness with Him *if* I so choose it!

Through Christ and the grace that He has won for us through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection—the same victorious grace that He pours out to us through prayer, His Catholic Church and Her sacraments, we're able to overcome the evils and the sins that threaten and endanger our lives, our happiness, our freedom, and our peace.

Brothers and sisters, in a post-Resurrection world where Christ has definitively conquered death, *fear is ultimately useless! And all of the saints, especially the martyrs who were killed for faith in Christ, understood this in the depths of their being!* If we're receptive to it, new life in the risen Christ fills us with an inner peace, joy, freedom,

faith, hope, and love that this world is simply *incapable of taking away from us!* There's certainly no guarantee that new life in the risen Christ is going to be easy or without suffering, but it is certainly much, much better than what this fallen, temporary world has to offer.

So brothers and sisters, today our risen, victorious Savior reiterates His call to each one of us—*He calls each of us by name—He invites us personally to give our lives completely to Him* so that we may enjoy the new life of grace and holiness that He is offering to us—a life of authentic freedom, happiness, peace, and love! Our risen Savior invites us to stay close to Him through prayer and the sacraments, most especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, *which is the greatest gift we have on this earth* because *it is* the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ sacramentally given to us! *It is* the crucified and risen Savior Himself truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist to strengthen us, nourish us, free us, heal us, and sanctify us. *The Mass is truly Heaven on Earth!*

So don't deprive yourselves and your families of all the grace and heavenly blessing that our risen Savior wants to give you every week in

the Mass! Don't deny yourselves all that our risen Savior wants to give you and do for you as we worship, praise, and thank Him in the Mass!

So as we prepare to encounter our victorious, risen Savior in the Most Holy Eucharist, let's praise and thank Him for all that He has done for us, for all that He has saved us from and let's ask Him for the grace to give ourselves completely to Him in sincere love and gratitude so that we may truly share in His glorious Resurrection!