

The world loves heroes. And in particular, our *culture* loves heroes, *especially superheroes!* I mean, the hype surrounding the upcoming blockbuster *Avengers: Endgame*, which is coming out on Friday, is just insane! This movie is expected to break box office records like nothing before. The massive success and popularity surrounding Marvel's *Avengers* franchise speaks to our culture's inherent desire for and love of heroes. And this is great, because humanity *needs* heroes! I mean who *doesn't love heroes?* And especially superheroes like Ironman, the Hulk, Batman, Captain America, Thor, etc.? Growing up in the 90s, which was the best decade ever to be a child, I especially loved Batman and X-men.

Brothers and sisters, today we celebrate the *supreme victory* of the *greatest Hero of all time!* And this Hero's power doesn't come from flying or shooting spider-webs from his arms. Rather His power comes from His nature and identity as the Son of the living God—*Love Incarnate—Truth and Life in the flesh!* Today, we celebrate the greatest and most transformative event in all of human history: the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! Make no mistake: our Savior

Jesus Christ *is* the *supreme* Hero Who saved us from the most evil and horrible villain of all time: the devil! In fact, the unique title of “Savior” should be synonymous with the title “hero.”

And what exactly did our Lord Jesus save us from? He saved us from sin, *especially* our own personal sins that harm us and others, and prevent us from becoming the best version of ourselves. He saved us from death, *especially* our own future death, and lovingly opened for us the pathway to eternity—the pathway to eternal happiness, peace, and freedom. He saved us from the power of suffering and transformed suffering into an instrument of sanctification and salvation. For out of the *darkest and most horrific evil of all time*, the crucifixion and death of the Son of God, came the *greatest good and victory of all time*: the salvation of the human race from sin and death.

Indeed Christ’s Resurrection demonstrates for us that if we humbly give our lives completely to our risen Savior in faith, hope, and love, then *death is not the end and evil will never have the last word!* If we give our lives completely to Christ our risen Savior in great love and trust, then He will *never* lead us astray, but rather *always* show us the

Way through the challenges and darkness of our lives. If we give our lives completely to Christ our Hero, then He will satisfy the deepest desires of our heart and mind and give us the authentic freedom, happiness, peace, and love that we so desperately crave.

St. Paul said it best in his letter to the Galatians: “For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.” Brothers and sisters, the Resurrection of Christ reminds us that *we were not created to be slaves—rather we were lovingly created to be free*: free from sin, free from death, free from suffering and fear, free to love and be loved, free to become all Who God created us to be so that we may be truly happy with every fiber of our being! Christ is our Hero *precisely because He is our Liberator!*

And the best part about our Lord Jesus Christ is that He’s not some imaginary, some fictional character, like Ironman or Thor, created in order to sell comic-books, action figures, and movies. No, He is God made Man, the Son of the living God who became one of us within space and time in order save us for all eternity! Brothers and sisters, our Catholic faith is not rooted in fairy tales or self-deluded wishful

thinking. Rather, our Catholic faith is rooted in actual historical events and persons, and the Resurrection of Christ is the most monumental event in human history. Indeed, today's Gospel from John has all of the hallmarks of an eyewitness account—an account which would have no other motive than to tell the truth and report what happened.

Moreover, the tomb of Christ is not some imaginary place, but a real physical site on earth where you can go see and touch! I was blessed to visit the Holy Land for the first time in the summer of 2015. And while I was there, I was able to participate in an all-night vigil in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which contains the tomb of Christ, as well as the site of the Crucifixion. The whole time I was there I just remember thinking that I'm at the holiest place on planet Earth. And when I prayed at the tomb of Christ, I'll never forget the Lord's words to me in prayer: "This is where I won the war for you." Brothers and sisters, through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection our Lord Jesus has already won the war for all of us! Out of His love for each and every one of us, Christ defeated evil forever!

Immediately after the homily, we will be invited to renew our Baptismal promises. We will be asked to freely make a three-fold renunciation of evil and a three-fold profession of faith. Make no mistake, we are going to renew our Baptismal promises before Christ Himself. As we freely make these promises to our Lord Jesus, may we *mean what we say* and *say what we mean*. May we answer truthfully and commit with every fiber of our being to follow our risen Lord *every day of our lives*, wherever that may lead us, knowing that *ultimately*, if we remain faithful to Christ and His Church, such discipleship will lead us to eternal happiness with Him.

The best way to keep our baptismal promises is to stay close to our risen Lord through prayer and the sacraments, *most especially* the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, *which is the greatest gift on earth* because it is the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, sacramentally given to us in the Most Holy Eucharist. There is no greater gift on this earth than the gift of our risen *Savior Himself truly present* in the Most Holy Eucharist! *Every mass* is a celebration of the great victory of Easter! *Every mass* is a renewal of our hope in Christ our Hero!

Brothers and sisters, Easter reminds us of the victorious power of God and why we as disciples of Christ should not live this life with fear and anxiety, but rather with joy and great hope! Easter reminds us that, in the end, ***God will always win***. Horrific scandals and barbaric crimes may occur inside and outside Christ's Church. Churches may close and cathedrals might sadly burn and crumble, but our Catholic faith will never die or be destroyed, since it's built on the firm Foundation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Savior of the human race—***the greatest Hero of all time Who conquered sin and death!*** In the supreme victory of Easter, our risen Lord proves to us that ***through Him, with Him, and in Him***, good will ***always*** triumph over evil, hope ***will always*** conquer despair, and love ***will always*** reign victorious in the end!

Brothers and sisters, wherever you are in your faith, our crucified and risen Savior loves you more than you can possibly imagine and He invites all of us to rise out of our graves and enter into a deeper relationship with Him, ***in and through*** His Church, so that we can enjoy new life in Him. For that is why Christ came, so that we might have life, have it to the full!

As we prepare to worship and encounter our risen Savior in the Most Holy Eucharist—*the greatest Hero of all time*, let us thank Him for the victory He was won for us and give ourselves completely to Him in faith, hope, and love so that we can rise to new life and inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world!