

Christ is risen! He is *truly* risen! Alleluia! Happy Easter everyone! Brothers and sisters, as human beings, we *absolutely love good news!* We love *receiving* good news, whether it's regarding our own personal lives, our families, our friends, our communities, our country, and our world. As human beings we love objectively good news because we're created for love and goodness—in other words we're created for God, Who *is* Perfect Love and Goodness itself.

And so whenever we receive authentically good news, we rejoice and celebrate! On this most sacred day, we celebrate the *greatest news we could ever receive—the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!* On this most sacred day, we celebrate our eternal redemption in Christ, Who *truly rose* from the dead, thereby conquering our future death! In the Resurrection of Jesus, we celebrate God's definitive victory over all evil! Easter reminds us that God has already won the war for us over all of the sin, suffering, and evil in the world!

The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is undoubtedly the greatest and most consequential event in all of human history. *Make no mistake, the Resurrection of Jesus really happened!* It's not some nice

fairy-tale we tell children in order to make them good people. It's not a cleverly devised fictional myth—for not only did the Apostles have absolutely no earthly, political, or monetary motive to lie about the Resurrection, but according to the Gospels, the Apostles *themselves* didn't even believe it at first!

According to Luke's Gospel, once the Apostles heard the news of the Resurrection from Mary Magdalene and the other women, we're told, "their story seemed like nonsense and they [the Apostles] did not believe them" (Luke 24:11)! So the Apostles, those closest to Jesus, His closest collaborators who followed him throughout His public ministry, *struggled* to accept the reality of the Resurrection. But once they accepted the Resurrection of Jesus for what it was, the Apostles became an unstoppable spiritual force, joyfully going to the ends of the known world and most of them to dying unspeakable deaths of martyrdom for the sake of this monumental Good News!

Brothers and sisters, *our entire Catholic faith is based on this Good News! As a Church, we are a people of Good News!* Literally, that's what the word "Gospel" means, in Greek, *Evangelion*, "Good

News”! *The Good News of Jesus’ saving Passion, Death, and Resurrection should define our entire life, period.* The Resurrection of Jesus should *absolutely change us*—it should change how we think, how we live, how we suffer, and how we relate to God and others. The *Resurrection* is the *supreme proof* that *Jesus is God*—the Resurrection is Jesus’ greatest miracle!

And so if *Jesus is God*, then that changes everything: then we should listen to Him, follow Him, obey Him, conform our entire life to Him, His teachings, and the teachings of His Catholic Church, which He Himself established upon the Apostles in order to sanctify us and ultimately bring us home to Him in Heaven.

So do we live our daily life according to the Good News of the Resurrection? Or do we live as if the Resurrection never happened? Miserable and without hope? As disciples of Christ, we can be tempted to celebrate, focus on, and live by the Good News of the Resurrection *only* at Easter time—as if the Resurrection doesn’t matter outside of Easter. This is a very destructive temptation that we need to firmly

reject, for our whole life as Catholics must be *defined* by the Good News of the Resurrection and the saving hope that it proclaims!

As fallen creatures, when we experience suffering and pain, we tend to be insular and dwell *solely* on our suffering, wallowing in it with self-pity, misery, frustration, anger, and sadness. Yet as disciples of our crucified and risen Savior, we must *always* live in the light of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the *greatest event* in all of human history! We should *never* view our suffering *apart* from the reality of the Resurrection! We should never see our suffering in total isolation from Christ and His saving Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Rather if we share in Jesus' suffering and death, we will also share in the glory of His Resurrection!

In his First Letter to the Corinthians around 56 AD, St. Paul writes about the Resurrection of Christ, declaring: "Death is swallowed up in victory. *Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?*" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully

devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:54-58). I like to think these powerful words of St. Paul are like divine “trash talk” against the forces of evil. St. Paul was someone who clearly lived the victory of Christ’s Resurrection in his daily life as a missionary disciple.

In light of the Resurrection, we as disciples of Jesus must *never* be intimidated by suffering, evil, and death. In light of the Resurrection, we can look death in the eye and with St. Paul exclaim, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” At the hour of death, when death inevitably comes to us all, we should *not be afraid!*

Rather, with great confidence in our crucified and risen Savior, we can look death in the eye and say, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have no power over me!” For it is *through Him, with Him, and in Him*, that death has lost! In Christ crucified and risen, the forces of darkness have been defeated once and for all! The war has already been won for us! *In the risen Christ, good will always over evil!* And as a buddy of mine who’s studying to be a priest in Poland once said to me, “Because He is risen, we can face tomorrow!” This is our Catholic

faith—this is the Good News that we’re called to joyfully live by in faith, hope, and love, regardless of the circumstances of our lives!

I’d like to close with the powerful words of Pope St. John Paul II, who, while on visit to Australia in November 1986, said: “We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. *But we know Jesus has conquered sin* and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery - the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. *“We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!”* We are not looking for a shallow joy but rather a joy that comes from faith, that grows through unselfish love, that respects the “fundamental duty of love of neighbour, without which it would be unbecoming to speak of Joy”. We realize that joy is demanding; it demands unselfishness; it demands a readiness to say with Mary: “Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

Brothers and sisters, on this Easter day, may we joyfully live and proclaim with Holy Mother Church the greatest news we could ever receive: Christ is risen! He is truly risen! Alleluia!