

April 17, 2022

Dear Friends,

He is risen! Alleluia! As he said he would! Jesus gave his life and was laid to rest as we are all laid to rest, in a tomb. But that tomb would not be his final resting place. There was something about this One, the one known as Jesus of Nazareth, that was too much for the grave. There was something about him, about who He was, about how He lived, that not even death could undo or overcome. Death tried, of course. Death had had a very good track record over the millennia of human life on earth. Every single human being who ever lived, died. And death held every single one of those people in its icy grip in the netherworld.

Death, as Scripture tells us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, had entered into this world through the envy of the devil. The devil hates life, hates the God who gives life, who is life. Thinks that God is way too soft and needs to develop a backbone. Too forgiving. Too compliant. Too lacking in pride. Not really worthy of being God. That is why the envious one whom we call satan or the enemy or the evil one has held sway for so long. So long that the enemy thought it was over, that God had capitulated.

But God had not capitulated to the control of the devil. There was a plan to renew the face of the earth. It would involve something truly new. Incarnation. God's beloved Son would have to take on our human flesh. To do that there would have to be cooperation on the part of a woman who would freely accept this responsibility, out of love for what God desired to do. That woman we call by her name, Mary. And she is feared by the enemy because she brought forth the Holy One of God--in our flesh. Her receptivity enabled the God man to become flesh and to suffer what every human suffers eventually—death. BUT. Only then could God transform the reality of death and restore all to life even against the considerable will of the evil one. Yes the enemy has a considerable will but it is no match for what God is about nor able to destroy the good that is being renewed even as we speak. Every celebration of Easter is an affirmation of the victory of Christ and the defeat of evil and the vanquishing of death. That death on the cross of the Holy One of God was to be the ultimate triumph and vindication of the enemy. It turned about to be its ultimate defeat. The gates of hell? Shall not prevail. Did not prevail. Will not prevail.

After all, Jesus reveals that there is the kingdom of God and we are all invited to live there forever—in peace and harmony. That is what God offers. The evil one offers the isolationist, despairing vicissitudes of hell. The choice as to where we will ultimately live is for each of us to make. It may seem like a no brainer but you know, there are many who just don't accept the God part of life here. They do so at their—very real—peril.

Happy Easter and Blessings of Peace,

Msgr. McHenry