

Easter Sunday
Easter Sunday in the Time of the Covid-19 Virus
April 12, 2020
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Two of the main themes of Easter are Love and Hope, the love of God for Jesus and for us in the gift of eternal life. As it says in the Opening Prayer: "On this day Jesus conquered death by the power of the Spirit and unlocked for us the path to eternity." Hope, that love is stronger than death, stronger than any virus or any other natural calamity.

Spiritual writer, Carlo Carretto, put this way in the following perspective:

"Whenever it seems that the world is abandoned by God and you feel that the sickness of disorder, violence, terror, and war has taken over and the world seems lost in chaos, say to yourself: Jesus died and rose again just to save us, and his salvation is already present among us. This is what it means to believe in the Resurrection."

II

The Easter Season gives us a chance to get to know many of the key people of the gospels. First of all, there is our Blessed Mother. Although it is not mentioned in the scriptures, common sense would tell us that the first person Jesus appeared to was Mary, his mother. Imagine that meeting! Her relief and joy, His love for her and his joy! A fisherman I met on a parish mission in San Diego wrote a very touching reflection on their holy relationship. It's called, "Easter's First Embrace."

O dawn of Easter morning bliss!
Jesus greets His Mother's kiss.
Love to Love in Easter's first embrace,
Springs forth forever, Salvation's Grace.
O joyful Reconciled peace,
Spirit of Christ, now guide us to the Eternal Feast.
Amen
--- Poem by a fisherman of San Diego, Ca.

In the gospel of John, the first person to notice something is amiss at the tomb was Mary Magdalene. She left where she was staying in Jerusalem "early in the morning while it was still dark" and made her way to where Jesus was buried. Pretty daring, I'd say. No doubt, led by the Spirit. We shouldn't be too surprised, though, at her courage, for she was a remarkable woman. After Jesus expelled "7 demons" – what these represent we don't know – from her, like the apostles she left everything and followed Jesus. She is the classic example of the penitent sinner, freed by love, to live a completely different way of life; a journey that would eventually take her to the most painful event of her life – the crucifixion of her best friend and liberator. 'Apostle to the apostles,' she is the first person to proclaim the news of the risen Lord; the most important of proclamations. Upset and confused, she rushes to where Peter and John are staying and exclaims to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb and (I) don't know where they put him." And, after Jesus' mother she is the first of the disciples to actually encounter the risen Christ.

When Peter and John heard the news from Mary, they left their hiding place and ran to see for themselves what she had told them. Notice of the two who “gets it”: John.

John, the intuitive, “He saw the burial cloths and the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head; “he saw and believed.” It took Peter, the rational one, longer to understand what Jesus had been telling the disciples for weeks – that he would have to suffer but be raised on the third day.

CONCLUSION

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”
(Responsorial Psalm)

As we rejoice and give thanks to God for the gift of his Son and of the Holy Spirit, let us be mindful of the signs of the resurrection around us in this time of the corona virus. Here are some possibilities.

Where we see empathy in action for those who are suffering.

Where we witness the selfless actions of health care workers and all first responders.

In the patience and kindness of family members as they live their lives in self- isolation.

In the wonderful creative initiatives on-line that help us with our spiritual lives, and the humorous ones too!

And in the signs of spring, that give us hope.

AMEN