



# The Holy Spirit Province NEWSLETTER

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021



## EASTER LIGHT, JOY, HOPE, AND CHALLENGE

When the Easter Vigil starts it tends to be dark, except for the light coming from the fire burning at the entrance to the church. One year a little girl grasped her mother's hand tightly, looked up, and said: 'Mummy, why is it so dark?' Her mother thought for a while and then she answered: 'To remind us what the world would have been like if Jesus had not been raised from the dead.'

Just two days ago you and I were remembering the sufferings and death of Jesus our Saviour. As we looked at his crucified body with sorrow, love, and gratitude, we came face to face with the dark side of human nature that led his enemies to torture and humiliate him, before killing him on the rough wood of a cross. On that black day in Jerusalem, the capacity of human beings to hate, hurt and harm one another went completely out of control.

Good Friday found us wondering over and over again: Why was this good man, this innocent man, this man with so much humanity and compassion, so much honesty and integrity, so much warmth and generosity, violated, humiliated, tortured, and murdered? Why was he?

The motives which led his enemies to torture and murder him are those which have always influenced human beings to hurt and harm one another - arrogance and pride, power-seeking and ambition, envy and jealousy, anger and fear, hatred, and revenge. Good Friday reminded us of the dark side of human nature and its associated evils - poverty, ignorance, crime, malnutrition, hunger, and disease.

Fortunately, however, this is not the whole truth. Far from it! For if we experience so much evil, we also experience an abundance of goodness. The crops keep producing food for our tables. The summer heat gives way to cooling autumn breezes. Most diseases are now curable. Tyrants are sometimes overthrown. Social reforms like pensions for the needy are here to stay. Conflicts end in reconciliation. Shaky marriages get patched up. Love survives misunderstandings, thoughtlessness, and indifference. Wars come to an end. Enemies become friends. We forgive others and are forgiven. In a word, there is goodness everywhere, much more than evil. The influence of the Risen Christ, which is to say the light of Easter, keeps shining upon us.

Yet there can be no doubt that one epic struggle goes on between good and evil. It goes on in the material universe, in human societies, and inside our personalities. Evil even seems stronger than good. But it has not yet finally triumphed. Good is remarkably resilient. Though too often it seems to be in danger of being crushed, it manages to survive, and even to win many victories. The words of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of Independent India, are so true: 'When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but, in the end, they always fall.' Words from our Easter Vigil Service express the same truth in an even more appealing way: 'The sanctifying power of this [Easter] night dispels wickedness, washes faults away, restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to mourners. It drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty.'

Our celebration of the resurrection of Jesus reminds us that evil will not have the last say either in us or our world. It leaves us in no doubt about the ultimate triumph of goodness, not only in ourselves but everywhere around us.

Jesus was buried at sunset, to all appearances a victim and a failure. But although his Jewish and Roman enemies killed him, they could not annihilate him. For on the third day after, the sun came up on him alive and powerful, influential, and victorious. It will be the same for us who celebrate Easter by renouncing and rejecting anything and everything dark and evil in our lives, and by renewing our determination to always walk with Jesus in his light. That is why we are renewing our baptismal promises tonight and renewing them with conviction, commitment, and enthusiasm.

Remember! We are turning our backs on evil and sin in every shape and form, and we are promising to keep following Jesus in a life of goodness and love, one shaped by his shining example, and one sustained by his powerful influence and presence.

So, we ask ourselves these questions:

Do you renounce sin, to live in the freedom of the children of God?

Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you? Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin? ETC.

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