



Ubique



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“Love is itself the Glory of God”

Easter

The Rt. Rev. William S.H. Downey

Without a doubt,
at the center of the New Testament
there stands the Cross,
which receives its interpretation from the Resurrection.

~ Hans Urs von Balthasar ~

The central message of Christianity is the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. St Paul has clearly said, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.” **1 Cor. 15:14.**

Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar quoted above is among the most lastingly significant theologians of the twentieth century. This idea that the sacrifice of Calvary can only be meaningfully interpreted in the light of the resurrection is essential for a clear understanding of the Mystery of Redemption.

We raise our hearts and minds in thanksgiving during the collect for Easter day when we pray, “for in the glorious victory which in it is commemorated and symbolized, Thou hast given us the sure and certain witness that good shall finally triumph over ill and that death is but a gateway to the ineffable splendor of eternal life in Thee.” In the act of sacrifice and surrender the very seeds of Life and Victory are contained.

The act of Creation is an expression of God’s love for the created. In his little “introductory” book ***Love Alone***, Balthasar showed how his theology placed at the center of his thinking the simple fact that “God is love” (**1 John 4:8**). Love, correctly understood in its full cosmic and personal meaning, is itself the Glory of God; it is the essence of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. The whole history of civilization can therefore be read as a history of what we have done and failed to do in relation to the call of divine love within our being and the being of the world.

Throughout his writings, Balthasar very clearly describes exactly what is wrong with the world, the culture, in which we find ourselves. But at the same time he states the possibility of an alternative. This alternative culture is based on the awakening of what he calls a “gnosis” or knowledge belonging to faith; the opening of an interior vision that “reads” the world in the light of love.

The world we see around us is the loving gift of the Creator to ourselves, and of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father in the Holy Spirit. This love is both the source of a true liberation for the human person, and of the respect we need to have for the world of nature in us and around us—a respect which is a necessary condition of being able to study the creation in such a way that it will genuinely become intelligible to us.

Even within Nature we see a Symbol of this ongoing cyclic expression of Love in activity expressed. Each year a spiritual wave of vitality enters the Earth at the winter solstice to impregnate the dormant seeds in the frozen ground, to give new life to the world wherein we live, and this work is done during the winter months, while the Sun is passing through the zodiacal signs Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. Then it crosses the celestial equator, from the southern signs where it has been during the winter months, and this cross-over, or crucifixion, is now cosmically associated with the sun’s entrance into the sign ARIES, THE RAM OR LAMB. Then the Sun ascends into the signs of the northern heavens to foster with its warming rays the growth of the seed in the soil which has been revitalized by the Christ Life wave during the winter months.¹

Martin Luther once said, “Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.” And so if we but open our eyes to the Reality of the resurrection in nature around us, we will intuit the Truth that “good shall finally triumph over ill and that death is but a gateway to the ineffable splendor of eternal life in Thee.” With that awareness comes the responsibility to share this blessed realization with all we encounter. The admonition of the Angels to the women who were first to arrive at the tomb was first “come and see” and then “go and tell.” He is not here, why seek you the living among the dead? Come and see where the Lord lay; now go and tell his disciples.

The joyful news that He is risen does not change the contemporary world.

Still before us lie work, discipline, and sacrifice.

But the fact of Easter gives us the spiritual power to do the work,

accept the discipline,

and make the sacrifice.

~ Henry Knox Sherrill ~

A blessed Easter to one and all!

Footnotes

¹ The Mystical Interpretation of Easter by MAX HEINDEL

“wherein also ye are risen with Him”

The One You Feed

By Rev. Timothy Donovan
Sermon for Easter 3, 2013

Today is the third Sunday after Easter and the readings continue the Easter theme of renewal—our rebirth with Christ into a better life. In the Gospel, Luke describes another instance when Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples and said, “Peace be unto you.” Put yourself in the minds of his disciples. They’d followed Jesus for about three years and, just when all seemed to be going fine, their world crashed—as often happens to us. Jesus had taught them many things but they (like us) were not yet able to understand. They were living the history that we take for granted. They did not have the benefit of “the rest of the story.” So, the first thing he told them was to be at peace. He was telling them (and us at the same time) not to be afraid of the future—to be at peace—and to trust in him as their futures unfolded.

Later in the Gospel, Luke tells us Jesus ***opened their understanding*** that they might understand the scripture. This is a central theme in the Liberal Catholic Church for biblical interpretation. As we often say, “We take scripture seriously but not literally.” There are multiple levels in all the writings and, in order to get the most from them, we must look below the surface. We dig deeper and look at what the words and concepts meant to the people of the times—not necessarily what they mean to us today. Too often, when we read anything, we look at the story from our eyes rather from the eyes of those who lived when the story was written and, by doing so, we miss the true message.

Words change their meaning over time and everything written has a particular meaning to the people of the time, the people who wrote the original message. With that in mind, what is the deeper meaning in today’s readings?

From the Collect: “... so may we by thy most glorious help rise from the darkness of sin into the ineffable splendor of conscious life in thee.”¹ The principal ideas here are “by thy most glorious help” and “rise from the darkness of sin.” We are told that God will give us his most glorious help and that we will rise from the darkness. Through all of recorded history, darkness has been used to describe ignorance and light has been used to describe knowledge. So, the collect tells us that God will help us find our way out of the darkness of our errors into the light of Christ.

Let’s deal with the concept of sin first. This word is emotionally charged and, like many other words, has changed in meaning over 2000 years. The oldest translation we have for the word sin as used in the Old Testament is “to miss the mark.”² Remember that, when Jesus referred to the scriptures, he was talking about the Jewish Bible—what we call the Old Testament—the New Testament would not be compiled for more than 200 years. Noted Old Testament scholar Joseph Telushkin³ helps us understand the original interpretation when he says that we sin—that is we make mistakes—AS Adam and Eve did not BECAUSE Adam and Eve did. We share their humanity just as Jesus shared our humanity and this is the interpretation Jesus would have known.

Sin in first century Palestine meant to make a mistake—no more—no less. Today's overemphasis on the devil, hell, and damnation is a modern interpretation that leads to a religion built on guilt rather than one built on love. More than anything else, Jesus taught love—not guilt. When asked what were the greatest commandments, he said to love God⁴ and to love your neighbor. The important concept here is love.

God is our loving father. He understands that we are going to make mistakes as we go through our lives. He does not punish us for being human and making mistakes as we learn. Rather, through his love, he gave us his son to teach us how to live a good life. Jesus showed us how to live by living a human life himself.

God knows us as we know our children. Remember that Jesus referred to God the Father as Abba which, in the Aramaic that he spoke, is a term of endearment. We would translate it today as 'dad' or 'daddy.' He was telling us that God is a loving father, not a stern judge. Since he knows we will make mistakes, he gives us his grace to help us grow through our mistakes just as we help our children grow through theirs.

Those of you who are parents know what I am saying. We know our children will make mistakes and we love them even when they goof up. Many times we let them fail because we know that they will gain experience and not make the same mistakes again. That is how we grow, and God, our loving father, helps us just as we help our own children. When the collect says "by thy most glorious help," it reminds us that the Holy Spirit is always working within us to help us not make the same mistakes we made in the past. He helps us grow up.

This brings me to a (very short) discussion of Holy Communion. There is a common misconception in the Catholic world that we can only receive Holy Communion when we are already in a "state of grace." I remember being told in second grade that I could not receive Holy Communion on Sunday if I had not gone to confession on Saturday—many of you may remember the same experience. (How can any second grader do something so bad that God would deprive him of his grace in Holy Communion?)

That whole idea is getting it backwards. Holy Communion is a source of grace. When we are really having trouble is when we need it the most. When we are the farthest away from the "state of grace," the Eucharist fills us back up. That's why, in the Liberal Catholic Church, we offer Holy Communion to all who approach Christ's altar with reverence and respect. God's grace is always here for us—especially when we need it the most. All we need to do is open our hearts.

Later, in the Gospel, Luke tells us, "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."⁵ There are two ideas here too: repentance and remission.

As we've talked before, repentance is also one of those words that has changed meaning over the centuries. Many people today think that to repent, a person needs to do penance (that is to hurt oneself to make up for mistakes because God is mad at you for making that mistake in the first place.) That is not the meaning at all. The word repent means to either "turn around"—as in change direction—or to "change your mind." I have read both translations and they are both supported by modern theological

scholarship.⁶ God, like the loving father he is, does not want us to do penance to to think badly about ourselves. He does not get angry with us. He wants us to learn from our errors and to not make them again.

Remission is the other idea. When our sins are remitted, they are gone. God has forgiven them, and here is the important part, we need to let go of them too.

Too often we don't let go of the past. ***We are what we think about most of the time.***⁷ So, be careful what you think about. Good thoughts lead to happy lives and bad thoughts lead to unhappy and frustrated lives. When we continue to relive the past and dwell on our errors and mistakes, we are destined to repeat them—and that is just the opposite of what we want to have happen.

There is an old Cherokee story that goes like this: A young boy was listening to his grandfather. His grandfather told him that we all have two wolves inside us—one who is mean and the other who is loving and that they constantly fight with each other. The young boy thought about it and asked his grandfather, “Which one will win?” Grandfather answered, “The one you feed.” Take a minute to ponder this story.

A big part of the Easter symbolism is that our old lives (and the mistakes we made) died with Christ on Good Friday and we rose with him as truly new people on Easter morning. In the Epistle, Paul tells us that “wherein also ye are risen with him.”⁸

This is where all the ideas from today's readings flow together. Through his love, God forgives us our mistakes (i.e. they are remitted), then he gives us his grace through the sacraments so that we can turn our lives around (i.e. we repent) so that we come in from the darkness of errors to live lives surrounded by Christ's light. That is what our loving Father wants for us just as that is what we want for our children.

Footnotes

¹ LCC Liturgy, Third Sunday after Easter, p108

² Smith, Huston (1991). *The World's Religions*. New York, Harper Collins — Kindle Location 6022

³ Telushkin, Joseph (1998). *Biblical Literacy*. New York, HarperCollins, pages 10 & 402

⁴ Matthew 22:37-39. King James Bible

⁵ Luke 24:46-47. King James Bible

⁶ Hitland. Repent, what does it mean. <http://www.hitland.net/07—article—repent—meaning.htm>

⁷ Earl Nightingale — originally Lao Tzu

⁸ Colossians 2:12. New King James Bible



Our Lady Queen of Angels altar at the conclusion of Maundy Thursday

With God, there is no nothing, for even “nothing” is filled with Intention.

And Intention...Assents.

And Assent...brings forth.

It Creates.

And in every assent we utter, every stitch we knit,
every empty bowl we fill, every lonely life we consent to touch,
every hateful remark we respond to with love,
we create something where there was nothing.

With our every “yes,” we assist in creation, with the continuation of the world.

We work with the Creator,
for whom no need is too small, for whom love knows no limits.

It is the great secret.

Elizabeth Scalia

[The Anchoress](#)

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Kathleen Clute and Parish Correspondents

News from the Regionary Bishop

General Episcopal Synod, 2016

For the one hundredth anniversary of the Founding of The Liberal Catholic Church, the General Episcopal will meet at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, in February, 2016. It is a very great honor for our Province to host the GES. While only bishops participate in the GES sessions, many services and other events will be planned, at which all laity and clergy are welcome. We hope that you will come as well.

Many volunteers will be needed for our Province to give the visiting Bishops the wonderful experience they deserve. If you are interested in assisting—as clergy, server, musician, host, or in any other capacity, including before the GES—please contact Kathleen Clute, Provincial Secretary, secretary@thelccusa.org.

Provincial News

Website The organ accompaniments for the Healing Service and Solemn Benediction have been recorded and are available for download on the website. The alternative melody for the *Adeste*, which many parishes use between Easter and Christmas, is also posted. <http://www.thelccusa.org/services-2/services.html>

Facebook If you are active on Facebook, please take a moment to “Like” our page at <https://www.facebook.com/TheLiberalCatholicChurchProvinceOfTheUnitedStates>

Parish News

The Church of St. Francis, Villa Park, Illinois

Anyone at St Francis will tell you this has been a rough winter for the Chicago area. So far this season, we have been dubiously blessed with a total of 80 inches of snow. So a great deal of our time has been spent shoveling ourselves out. Spring is officially here, yet we are still getting a few snowflakes and some chilly temps. Most of us are praying that flower-filled, warm sunny days will soon be upon us.

Our parish is missing our previous Deaconess and long time church member Julie Hamilton. She has begun a new chapter of her life in Colorado. Of course, we are happy for her and wish her all the best life has to offer, but we do and will continue to miss her. Although we don't have a great many children in our parish, she was the person who conducted our Sunday school and we are presently working on solving this dilemma.

On a more upbeat note, Bishop Ruben Cabigting has been visiting us and on occasion celebrating Holy Eucharist. We are pleased and honored by his presence. Father Terrance visited us on Christmas Eve and served Midnight Mass. The service was beautiful and exceptionally nice, as we were all happy to see him. We also enjoyed having the company of his wife Lori Jo Metz. Our women's group, The Order of Our Lady, got together and made a dozen baby blankets with matching carry all bags. They were donated to organizations that support new mothers in need.

We are blessed having Fr. Daniel to celebrate mass and carry the responsibilities of Rector for our parish. He celebrates Holy Eucharist each Sunday at 10:00 A.M. In addition, Fr. Daniel leads a healing service on the first Wednesday of each month. Our church Deaconess, Rebecca Collin, leads the Seven Ray Rosary on select dates. Our parish also holds a pancake breakfast after the Holy Eucharist on the fifth Sunday of the month. If you are in our area, please, join us for any of these events. In addition we would enjoy your company for Coffee And, after Sunday morning services.

Our library has a plethora of books for your reading pleasure. We have a selection of books for sale, our beautiful handcrafted Seven Ray Rosaries and other small gifts. Our newsletter is published seven times a year and is extraordinarily well written. You can visit us on Facebook, search “Church of St Francis.” Give us a ‘Like’ while you’re there!

Sandra Brigando

Our Lady Queen of Angels, Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Our Regionary Bishop, the Rt. Rev. William Downey, visited Our Lady Queen of Angels for Holy Week. He celebrated Holy Eucharist in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursday and baptized an infant and confirmed two members on Holy Saturday. Our new tradition of Seder on Maundy Thursday evening was followed by Complin and the stripping of the altar, a very profound ritual. For Good Friday we observed the Veneration of the Cross and Complin. The week culminated in an Episcopal High Mass for Easter, including the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

Meanwhile, landscaping and other upgrades are continuing outdoors. The first six trees in our memorial tree line have been planted, and our first lighted sign has been installed.

Kathleen Clute



*Maundy Thursday Eucharist
at Our Lady Queen of Angels*

*Bishop William
with new confirmands,
Jessica and Madonna,
and their sponsors
on Holy Saturday*





Procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Easter Sunday.



Above: Fr. Timothy Donovan, with Fr. Milton Shaw seated to his right; leading Seder.

Right: Now everyone can see that we are here!

Photo of sign courtesy of +William Downey. All other Queen of Angels photos, including the one on page 6, courtesy of Sean Donovan.



Triennial Provincial Assembly & Clerical Synod

October 16–19, 2014

Our Lady Queen of Angels in Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Join us for fellowship & inspiration!

Highlights

Presiding Bishop Graham Wale

Regionary Bishop William S.H. Downey

Altar Training for Clergy during the day, Thursday 10/16

Provincial Assembly opens Thursday evening

Liturgy

Holy Eucharist

Offices

Rosary

Vespers

Music in the Liberal Catholic Church

Esoteric Christianity in Modern Life

Bishop's Hour with Bishop Wale

Complete Triennial information packets

will be mailed to all parishes

later this month.

Registration will be online;

details will be in the information packet.

Limited Scholarships are available;

details in the information packet.

UBIQUE

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Contributors freely express their opinions and beliefs. The Liberal Catholic Church, Province of the United States, is responsible only for statements or information marked "official."

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Deadline for submissions:
Monday, August 4, 2014