

## Easter Sunday

I take as my text today from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians:

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy Sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.”

What a glorious day this is; Christ is risen. Our Lord has overcome death and defeated Satan. He has freed us from the bonds of sin. Through the sacrifice of His Only Son, Jesus Christ, God has established a New Covenant with us, sealed with His Blood.

Through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who death could not hold, we have been given the hope and promise of eternal life.

With this Easter celebration, we affirm that Christianity is a living religion, that we worship a living God who has established a personal relationship with us and who has lived among us.

We affirm that the God we worship is all powerful, all knowing, and all loving.

We affirm that the God we worship is not estranged from us but is ever present and shares Himself with us in a heavenly banquet, the Eucharistic Feast.

In a most beautiful act of worship, the breaking of bread in the Holy Eucharist, we are joined with our Lord and Saviour, the Risen Christ, as we offer ourselves as living sacrifices, just as He continues to offer Himself for us in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

It is a celebration, not of death, but of life; it is a living sacrifice in which we all share. As we receive the consecrated bread and wine, our lips touch the Body and Blood of Christ, God Himself, and we are nourished and strengthened spiritually, even physically, by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit to affect us wholly.

Even as we celebrate the Risen Christ, the passage we read today from St. Paul takes us beyond the events of this day into the future and our baptism.

As Christ died on the Cross for our sins and rose again from the dead to ascend to the right hand of God, something comparable happens to us in baptism: we, too, die; we die unto sin and we rise up again resurrected to a new life, a life in Christ.

The whole concept is so beautiful: when we choose Christ and are baptized, we become a new person. We experience a rebirth and what better reminder of the beauty of that rebirth than springtime when a rebirth of nature surrounds us.

Truly, according to St. Paul's thinking, we rise up from baptism as a different person and our thoughts are no longer trivial, no longer concerned with earthly things but are set on things above.

As Paul says: *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

It's not a matter of divorcing ourselves from the world but, rather, putting it all into perspective. When we become Christians, our view of everything changes; we are no longer centered on the worldly but on things eternal and we must live as if this world no longer matters.

For us, the world was forever changed on that first Easter Day. The empty tomb and the empty Cross have become symbols of that change.

They symbolize the power of love: absolute, selfless love.

As Christians, we become recipients of that love when we center our lives on Jesus Christ.

Christ must be our life. How many times have we said about someone who is devoted to something in particular, such as sports, that sports **is** their life. Or perhaps we have said about a musician that music **is** their life.

What we are saying is that such people find life and all of life's meaning in sports, or music. Really, it could be almost anything.

And that's the way it should be with us as Christians. Christ should be our life. We should find in Christ, life and all of life's meaning.

That doesn't make us any less part of the world but Christ must be the most important thing in our lives, for He is life.

Now, in the light of the Cross, we can see worldly things for their true value. The power that flows from that Cross enables us as Christians to set our hearts on things above.

It is above, not in this world, but in heaven above where Christ is and from Him flows all spiritual blessings and all the means of supporting a spiritual and heavenly life.

That is confirmed on this Easter Day. It is from heaven that the Bread of Life came into the world, the bread of life which nourishes us and strengthens us, the Bread that if a person eat thereof he shall never die.

Easter Day confirms our hope of eternal life.

Whatever Easter means to you, even for all of God's creation, it is a glorious light shining forth from an empty tomb as the morning sun breaks forth to dispel the darkness and announce a new dawn, a new day, renewed life, a new hope.

Jesus Christ is that Light, that Hope.

Christ's Death on the Cross reminds us of the great love of God, God's desire to preserve us for Himself, and the extent to which God will go to make it possible for us to be united with Him eternally.

Christ's Resurrection on Easter Day reminds us that ours is a Living Faith that ends not in death but eternal life.

Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed.