

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)
Week of 5 April, 2009

To my brothers and sisters in the Corps:

At the cry of the first bird,
they began to crucify thee, O cheek like a swan!
It were not right ever to cease lamenting;
it was like the parting of day from night.

Ah, though sore the suffering
put upon the body of Mary's Son,
sorer to him was the grief
that was upon her for his sake.

(Gaelic poem from the 1100s,
found written in the margin
of an old Irish manuscript)

As we begin the WEEK OF SALVATION (that's what Holy Week is called in the Eastern Catholic traditions), I offer that short poem as a focus for all of you. This coming week is (or "should be") the center of our entire religious experience.

Suffering + Faith = Resurrection.

My hope is that each of you will keep this WEEK OF SALVATION in his or her own way, joining the Catholic community at Most Holy Trinity for the Solemn Liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday evenings.

May Easter be a RISING FROM THE DEAD for each one of us, and may Christ, through his passion and death, have mercy on us all...and lead us to our own resurrections.

THINGS CATHOLIC CAN DO:

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY (5 April)

Regular Sunday schedule

Saturday, 1715 – at the Chapel

Sunday, 0900 and 1100 – at the Chapel

Sunday, 1715 – WH5300

Blessed palm will be available at all the Masses

MONDAY (6 April), TUESDAY (7 April), WEDNESDAY (8 April)

Mass in Washington Hall (0630)

Mass at the Chapel (1205)

HOLY THURSDAY (9 April)
No morning or noon Masses
EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
at the Chapel at 2000

GOOD FRIDAY (10 April)
No morning or noon Masses
GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY
at the Chapel at 1700

HOLY SATURDAY (11 April)
No 1715 Saturday Mass
EASTER VIGIL
at the Chapel at 2200

EASTER SUNDAY (12 April)
Easter Mass at the Chapel at 0900 and 1100
NO 1715 MASS IN WH5300

DID YOU KNOW?

THE WORD "EASTER":

In almost every language except English, the name for "Easter" is some form of the word for "Passover" (for example, "Pasch", from the Hebrew word "pesach" for Passover...or the French "Paques", from the same root).

When Christianity arrived in the countries of northern Europe, the feast received a new name from the Teutonic people, and that name is used by English speakers today: Easter.

At one time, it was thought that the name came from an Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, Eostre (the Catholic monk-historian Bede the Venerable, who died in AD 735, thought that this was the case).

But there is some doubt that there ever was such a goddess' name.

The more probable explanation comes from a misunderstanding.

During Easter week, the newly-baptized wore WHITE garments for the whole week following Easter as a symbol of their new identities.

The Latin word for WHITE is "alba".

The Old High German speakers took this to refer not to clothing but to the dawn.

Their word for "dawn" was "eostarun".

For them, Christ was the sun that rises at dawn in the east.

Hence, from their word "eostarun", we get the name "Easter".

GOT A QUESTION?

Q: Father, what does the Church think about "competition"?

A: The Church believes that “competition” is a natural part of human life.

From early youth, people are immersed in attempts to “compete” with someone or other, and the process is seen as a means of highlighting our own individual ability or to win much-desired results.

The ideal type of “competition” should be healthy, stimulating and rewarding for the individual and for society.

Still, this is not to say that it’s always a good thing.

“Competition” can also be very damaging...to both a person’s psychological and spiritual life.

It becomes evil when we make it evil, and we can do that in a variety of ways:

- when “competition: becomes the center of our lives;
- when love of “competition” replaces love of God or neighbor;
- when the thrill of winning makes us selfish or greedy;
- when we debase ourselves or others just to win something;
- when a material goal becomes a substitute for spiritual objectives;
- when “competition” becomes an end in itself;
- when we become ruthless and obsessive in “competition”;
- when we desire only to overrun our competitors and treat them with contempt.

The Church would say that “competition” for earthly goals is deceptive and fleeting, and that the great “competition” of all is to compete with oneself, with one’s own infirmities...and to be successful.

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

WEAKNESS AND VULNERABILITY:

These may not seem like very attractive concepts to anyone, especially in a “warrior” culture, but they have played a central part in understanding the life of Jesus AND in trying to imitate his life.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul quotes God as saying the following to him:

My grace is sufficient for you...

and then Paul draws the following conclusion:

I will rather boast most clearly of my weaknesses,
that the power of Christ may dwell with me.

The kind of WEAKNESS that he’s talking about is not the human weakness that easily gives in to temptation.

And it’s not the “weakness of the flesh” as opposed to the “strength of the spirit”.

What is meant is the willingness of the Catholic follower of Jesus to GIVE UP one’s personal strength and power to replace them with the strength of God.

In their versions of THE BEATITUDES, both Matthew (5:3-12) and Luke (6:20-26) present the following categories of “weak and vulnerable” people:

- those who are defenseless;
- those who are broken by human tragedy;
- those who sorrow and mourn;
- those persecuted by evil forces;
- those who are belittled;

- those who are rendered insignificant by the strong and robust of the world.

Jesus calls such people BLESSED.

It goes against every value of “the world”, but he insisted on it...even to the extent of giving himself into the hands of evil so as to overcome evil.

So, in his infancy, in his agony, in his death, we see him choosing WEAKNESS for the sake of God’s will...and God rewarded him by RAISING HIM UP.

In his Letter to the Philippians (2:6-11), Paul quotes the words of an ancient Christian hymn. He recommends that the Philippians follow the example of Christ:

Have among yourselves the same attitude that Jesus had.

Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave and coming in human likeness.

He humbled himself and became obedient to death, death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend...

Jesus refused the kind of power that controls and dominates.

He accepted WEAKNESS AND VULNERABILITY in his life.

And he gave himself over to the power of his Father...so he could enter the lives of others at their most vulnerable point.

Catholic spiritual life cannot be based in any way on control, domination or manipulation.

But following the example of Jesus as presented in the Scriptures, we should cultivate care, compassion, self-sacrifice, reciprocity and mutuality. These are the only STRENGTHS that can actually have an effect in the world.

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

“Do not let SUNDAY be taken from you,
either through sports activities
or through anything else.
If your soul has no SUNDAY
you become an orphan.”

Dr. Albert Schweitzer

And that’s the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!

Have a good weekend!
There's lots of stuff going on...
but try not to forget God.
And hang in there.

Woodie