

Easter 07

This the first feast of the Church, the center of its liturgical year, and it is such because it celebrates the event which founds our faith, the resurrection of Jesus. As St. Paul says, if Christ is not risen, then our faith is in vain. But, in faith, we affirm this fact: Jesus is risen from the dead, and his resurrection is a promise of our own resurrection.

Therefore, what we celebrate here is life. If you are lucky enough to have family, then tomorrow, as you join together to eat and drink and be happy in each other's company, thank God for the life that you are enjoying---for food and wine and laughter in his presence, but most of all for those who make this laughter possible, your loved ones. For in all this God is present because God is the God of life, and what you are experiencing in a familial way is the gift of life.

What our faith offers us in addition to such a celebration is life without limits. For the life we celebrate in a family way, as wonderful as it can be, is, we have to admit, a threatened life. It is threatened by sickness and old age and finally death. It is also threatened by the sins which can emerge in a family, sin of pride or

indifference, sins of violence or neglect, sin of passion and coldness. Take these away and you have the life which the risen Jesus promises us: life in its fullness, life in perfect love. This is an unimaginable gift because we never experience life in this way here and now. But it is what we are promised by the resurrection.

And that is why we who believe in this promise must try to live in anticipation of this full life. As far as possible, we must try to make our lives on the individual, familial and society level lives free of sin. No, we cannot free them from sickness and old age and death, but we can free them from the effects of sin. In the Letter to the Colossians we have a good description of what this new kind of life should be like: “Put on then as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col: 3:12-17). May this be a description of our lives!

Now let us renew our baptismal vows which commit us to this new kind of life.