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Easter Sunday Year A (April 12, 2020)

This last week we celebrated the Sacred Triduum, beginning with Holy Thursday and the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Holy Thursday is a commemoration of the institution by Christ of the Sacraments of the Holy Orders *and* The Most Holy Eucharist. Archbishop Sheen makes clear the connection with the Passover meal of Holy Thursday that Christ celebrated and the *Cross and the Resurrection*:

Since Our Divine Lord came to die, it was fitting that there be a Memorial of His death! Since He was God, as well as man, and since He never spoke of His death without speaking of His Resurrection, should He not Himself institute the precise Memorial of His own death and not leave it to the chance recollection of men? And this is exactly what He did the night of the Last Supper... His Memorial was instituted, and this is important...because He would live again after the Resurrection. His Memorial would be the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets, it would be one in which there would be a Lamb sacrificed...it would be a Memorial of a New Covenant" (Chapter 36: The Last Supper).

As it has also been noted by Dr. Scott Hahn that "Calvary is an execution unless the Eucharist that Jesus institutes is nothing less than the Passover of the New Covenant. Then, in fact, as such the Passover of the New Convent is a sacrifice that Jesus initiates, but it is a sacrifice that Jesus consummates only by laying his life down there on the Cross for us at Calvary." So, to understand what these days are about, they must be taken in context of the whole and not just in part. Good Friday does not make sense without Holy Thursday; and Good Friday does not make sense without the Resurrection on Easter.

Which brings us to what we celebrate today. Now, those of you who know me, know that I usually begin my Easter Homily with a kind of joke, a funny story, if you will, that would hopefully evoke in us sense of the joy and laughter that our lives should be about as we live the Good News of Jesus Christ. However, it is hard to tell such a story through the written word, without the proper vocal inflections and dramatic pauses, etc., that make such a good story work. Plus, without the presence of your laughter (or groans, whatever the case may be) it just would not be the same. (And besides this, I must admit, it is getting harder and harder each year to come up with new material). So, this year, I will forgo the funny story. I know! I know! You are all so disappointed! (Or relieved). But we are people of hope, so next year, we will see what happens. For now, let us take a look at the Gospel reading for Easter Morning!

As we finish listening to the Gospel reading from John (20:1-9) my first thought is that there is an awful lot of running here! After seeing the empty tomb, Mary Magdala "ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved." Then we are told that both Simon Peter and the other disciple (presumably John the Evangelist) both ran to the tomb. What is

described is almost a race. John breaks ahead of Peter and gets to the tomb first, but then Simon Peter arrives and enters the tomb before John. All of this running is motivated by a sense of wonder, probably mixed with a little confusion, as we are told several times, his disciples never really understood what Jesus meant when he said that he would rise again. However, this running in haste to the Lord is the kind of drive that every disciple of the Lord should have.

So often we do find ourselves running about from here to there, almost aimlessly. We are so busy with so many things. Most of them good, I am sure, for the most part anyway, but nevertheless, we can sometimes find ourselves running about in endless circles, meeting ourselves coming and going. And it can be very frustrating. Wouldn't it be nice if we could have one thing that could focus us and our families in the same direction, the same hope, the same joy? My friends, these disciples of Jesus were the same as us in many ways. Yet what inspired them and united them was this: It was the risen Lord! And that is our true and only hope!

To sum up the Gospel, Bishop Robert Barron says: **JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!!** This is not wishful thinking! This is not a happy platitude. It is truth, **THE TRUTH**, which gives life and hope to the world. No one else can make this claim. This truth, as born by the witness of those who testified with their very lives and gained nothing for themselves in this world, except perhaps imprisonment or even martyrdom, is what the world needs and for which it hungers. This truth, which has gathered people of every nation and tongue, this truth which penetrates, not just with mere words, but with the very grace of Christ himself, is that which we yearn. Even now, amid the current crisis in the world, where most of the faithful are not able to receive the sacraments, this truth beckons us to come. This desire, if truly yearned for from the heart, will always be there for us. And if we cannot meet him now, when the Lord calls us, may we run to him with the joy and hope of Mary Magdala, Simon Peter and John. Alleluia! Amen!