

Easter Message

Easter is the most significant feast of the Christians. It's importance is gauged from the fact that there is a 40 days of preparation preceding the feast when the faithful pray more sincerely, fast at least on two days during that period, that is, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, abstain from certain foods and give alms to support the poor. Immediately preceding Easter, is the Easter Triduum. During those days Christians keep the memorial of Jesus' last supper with his twelve disciples, his crucifixion and resurrection. Before the last supper he washed the feet of each one of them and told them that they too must do likewise. He did not mean that they should literally wash the feet of people but that they must be at the service of people; they should not have a sense of superiority or power over people but should be ready to undertake even the meanest job to bring relief and consolation to the suffering and underprivileged brethren. On Good Friday the Christians remember the death of the Lord Jesus on a cross. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is celebrated on Easter Sunday.

Jesus was God's own son who was incarnated as a man to bear the burdens of the sins of the whole world. God the father dumped on him the sin of all mankind. Jesus accepted his death willingly as the fulfillment of God's plan for him to save men. His death was the reparation for all sins. Through his death God forgave the sins of all mankind and gave them the status of his own sons and daughters. Jesus had foretold the apostles a number of times that he would rise again on the third day. And Jesus rose to life again on Easter morning.

A radical transformation took place in Jesus at his resurrection. He now adorned a glorified body which is not bound by time and space. He could enter into locked rooms and converse with them, accompany them on their journeys incognito. Immediately they were not able to recognize him but at a certain moment they did recognize his true identity. He invited them to believe that he is the true saviour of the world and promised eternal life to those who believed in him.

Easter is the feast of triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of justice over injustice, of God over Satan. This feast proclaims that Jesus who was dead is alive for ever; he is omnipresent and he loves all men, including sinners. It gives us the assurance that Good Friday is not the end; suffering and pain are part and parcel of human existence; it has a salvific value. Evil and injustice will one day give way to goodness and justice as after the night the sun will rise again in all its brilliance. Jesus suffered ignominious death out of love for man but God in his love raised him from the dead. The response to his great love is remembering him and keeping his commandments to love one another.

Like Christ we also will be raised from the dead one day to be with him in heaven. Each time we display our love of others, we share in the resurrection. Each time we face a betrayal of trust, we share in the passion and resurrection of Jesus. And every time we fail in our attempts to ward off temptations but keep on trying to overcome them, we share in the

resurrection. When we continue to hope, even though our hope seems unanswered, we share in the power of Jesus' resurrection. In short, the message of Easter is that nothing can destroy us: pain, sin, rejection or death because Christ has conquered all these, and we too can conquer them if we put our faith in Him.

Easter invites us to be humble and to turn to God, the source of all consolation in total trust. In his risen state, Jesus encourages and accompanies us more especially at the times of pain and crisis. With him we will experience peace and joy in our lives. His parting gift to his followers was the Holy Spirit to abide with them forever enabling them to be faithful to him and bear him witness. May Jesus be praised! May the Holy Spirit empower us!