

HOM Easter 2024 B March 31

The Resurrection of Jesus has changed everything. Without it, life would be absurd, without purpose. Even an earthly utopia with each person fully educated, afforded proper medical care, well-fed, nicely housed, meaningfully and gainfully working, part of a close-knit family, would not make life worth living. Nor would having the best of everything this world has to offer. Appeasing capricious or imaginary gods might add some adventure, I suppose, but nothing truly satisfying or meaningful.

The Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes addresses this problem. It seeks meaning for life that ceases with death...and finds none. Even the reality of a good God – the God of Abraham and Moses -- and His offer to Man of some kind of vague existence beyond the grave in the bosom of Abraham just doesn't cut it. Life still remains "*Vanity of vanities!*" in the wise words of Qoheleth, the Hebrew name for Ecclesiastes, a teacher of wisdom.

But the Resurrection of Jesus changes everything. First of all, Jesus said He would rise from the dead. If He hadn't risen, He would be a false prophet, even a liar. However, His Resurrection validates not only His prophecy about being raised, it also validates all of His words and actions. Only a fool would ignore them.

And what Jesus' words and actions announce to us is that we were created out of love by God to share in His blessedness – His happiness – forever. And more, that we attain this by oneness with God in His Son by which, while remaining who we are as creature, we also share His divinity – His divine glory. In other words, God is offering us to become God in consummate nuptial oneness with Jesus. Right reason tells us that there could not possibly be anything better than that. And only that could make life meaningful and perfectly satisfying forever.

In my homily for Good Friday, I mentioned the near death experience in 2017 of a man named Ed Jozsa. Married with three adolescent children, he had re-located to the state of Indiana, about an hour from Indianapolis, in connection with his work as an airline pilot. Ed and his family were Catholics who went to Sunday Mass more often than not, but were more worldly than religious.

While driving not far from home with children in the car – his own and others, taking them to track practice or possibly returning – he was struck head on by a car that was forced into his lane when it was rear-ended while following a farm tractor at the end of a long line of vehicles.

Jozsa said that his injuries were intensely and excruciatingly painful – requiring 23 operations – but that they were nothing compared to the unbearable agony of the absence of God – the absolute desolation of separation from God – that he experienced. Nor did his suffering amount to anything compared to the sublime joy of being immersed in God’s love that he also experienced. In other words He was given a small foretaste of Hell and of Heaven and he heard the voice of what he believed to be an angel say: “*Your choice.*” He understood not only that Hell and Heaven are both real, but that their realities are infinitely more than anything we experience in this life or could imagine.

He lives now totally for God and heaven, helping his family and others to do so also. He can no longer fly planes commercially but he has a daily podcast based on the Scripture readings for Mass each day in order to bring people to Christ, and he travels around the country telling his story. You can listen to it by googling *Life Site News Ed Jozsa*.

It may seem impossible for us to live entirely for Jesus and eternal life with Him, but it’s not. Indeed, it is something the saints have done and everybody can do and is invited to do by God and indeed must learn to do. It is not something that diminishes our lives, but rather, enriches our lives here and now. St. John Vianney said that TO PRAY AND TO LOVE IS OUR HAPPINESS.

We have to do this in sufficient measure to experience the truth of it. A sufficient measure of prayer is not just the minimum to pay lip service to God and to get it out of the way, but rather, whatever amount is required to satisfy our need to live in daily communion with God and His angels and saints.

When it comes to love, a sufficient measure is everything we have to give, first to God, and then to others. It is love that is equal to Christ’s – not in the weight of the Cross carried or in the severity of the abuse endured but in the amount of self that is offered to God’s will – 100% -- poured out for

others yet humbly not exceeding our real limitations nor neglecting our true human needs.

When – no matter what our vocation or state in life is – we live no longer for ourselves but for Him who died and rose again for us – then we are loving in sufficient measure for our true good and the true good of others; we are living for heaven by way of the Cross of obedience and love with Jesus. Our lives will then become more and more a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for God's goodness and of helping others, especially to get to heaven.

And even if we are not motivated to do this, and don't know where to begin, there is something simple and effective we can and should do to get started, that will bring it to fullness in us. If we put into practice what I call Eucharistic Self-Offering through the hands of Mary and with the help of St. Joseph – and stick with it – it will get done – not so much by our doing as by the Blessed Mother's doing and St. Joseph's doing. What we have to do is to consent that it be done to us according to God's will and keep renewing this consent and it will get done.

Here are the words to pray silently and sincerely with every Holy Communion, striving to live by them in between: I AM ALL YOURS O MOST LOVING JESUS THROUGH MARY YOUR MOTHER WITH THE HELP OF ST. JOSEPH.