Easter Morning 2020
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When we speak of Christ as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end, it is with Jesus’ resurrection in mind. Easter morning divides time and creation into before and after, when we receive the message of eternal life through faith in Christ, and believe it.

The events that occurred on Easter morning are the model for our Sunday worship ever since. Without the Resurrection, what happened in Jerusalem during Passover twenty centuries ago would have long been forgotten. So would the life of Jesus.

I remember a conversation I once had, and others like it since. This fellow, a wonderful guy, said he really appreciated and valued the Christian message, but he simply couldn't accept the divine nature of Jesus, including his miracles and resurrection.

That's a fairly common point of view in the world we live in. But without the resurrection, the Christian message makes very little sense. Loving your enemy, going the extra mile and turning the other cheek hold little value in purely human terms.

Only as the true Son of the Father, do Jesus' teachings take on meaning, and reveal to us the mind of God, his will, and plan for salvation. As human ideas, we can select, judge and even twist the words of Jesus to our liking, to justify ourselves and our misdeeds.

But as divine ideas, we cannot pass judgment so easily. We can accept them, and live according to them to the best of our ability, or we can reject Jesus’ counsel, and live in a world of shadows, opinion and confusion.

When St. John writes that Jesus is the light of the world, the evangelist’s words are not purely symbolic. Christ opens and illumines our soul, allowing us to see beyond the horizon of this life, beyond the darkness of our present world.

His light enables us to begin to discern right from wrong, truth from error. No one human person alone could do that, even someone very good. And the event of the Resurrection is to remind us that Jesus Christ is no ordinary man.

But the Resurrection is not simply one more miracle, a final sign, an exclamation, intended to persuade the unbelieving. Christ's resurrection is the necessary outcome, the consequence of who he is; Son of the living God. That is the witness of the empty tomb.

The tomb itself proves nothing; it is rather what it suggests or implies. Very reasonably, Mary Magdalene believes her Lord's body had been stolen. It is only when the disciples encounter the risen and somehow transformed Jesus that their faith comes alive.

When we gather in faith, we encounter the same Christ, present and living in the Gospel, most especially in the Eucharist we share, and among one another. We are his body. This Easter event was the defining moment for all time and all people; alpha and omega.
Catholic, after all, means universal. What has been opened to us in the risen Christ is God’s full and all-embracing revelation to the entire world.

When we preach Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, and all that includes, from the Annunciation to Pentecost, we are saying more than, "come try our Church". We are proclaiming, as best we are able, a universal insight into the heart of reality; nothing less.

And nothing informs our experience of reality in this world, more than the fact of our own death. That is our personal and collective event horizon, and always has been. By his death and resurrection, Christ extends that horizon to infinity, potentially for all.

For those who grasp it….who see it…..who accept it….this changes everything, or it should. It has that power. As St. Paul writes, “be intent on things above rather than on things of earth. After all you have died.”

Once we have seen through death’s illusion, in light of the risen Christ, we have in a sense died, and live already in eternity. We don’t hope to one day stumble into eternal life only after passing from this world. We enter it as soon as we accept eternal life in Christ.

That is the Good News of the Father's kingdom. That kingdom is at hand, Jesus says, it is already here within our grasp. When Jesus speaks of the Truth which will set us free, that simple Truth is our eternal and intimate relationship to our Father in heaven.

And our freedom is to live our lives on earth according to that knowledge, and with all the passion, and devotion that sacred bond implies.

What the events of that first Easter morning always say to me, is that we are able to live more fully and deeply than we have yet dared, because of what Christ has shared with us by his Resurrection, in which we participate by faith.

At the same time, we can never exhaust the mystery that remains at the core of our faith. That’s why we call it the paschal mystery. We must never presume to know more than we do.

After 2,000 years we still stretch our minds and souls to comprehend what Mary, and Peter, and John experienced as they entered the open tomb in the early hours of that first Resurrection day. When we receive Christ in the Eucharist may we share in that same hope and promise.