

"PEACE IS MY GIFT TO YOU"

There is deep significance in the fact that the first Easter greeting spoken by Our Lord to His Apostles on the day of His Resurrection, consisted of one word, "Peace." It would seem, therefore, that the fruit of the Redemption, the victory of the Cross, the gift of the New Life of Grace, are all epitomized in this one small word.

But it is the Peace of Christ that is meant, not peace as the world knows it and gives it. We are told that His peace surpasses understanding. Certainly it is little understood by many. In the right sequence of events peace should follow victory. In the history of our own times, however, there have been seeming victories followed only by more wars and rumors of wars. The victory of Christ over sin and death was, indeed, followed by peace, the peace of our reconciliation with God, the peace of our union with Christ, the peace of the Holy Spirit, bending and breathing over the world of men and drawing them into a brotherhood of true charity.



This peace, however, is like all other gifts of God: it can be accepted or rejected; it can be kept or lost; it can be fostered or forfeited. By the great but often fateful blessing of freedom, we can undo the work of our salvation in the Blood of Christ.

It is my Easter hope and prayer that we may all know how to treasure, preserve and increase in our souls, in our daily lives, in our association with all our brethren in Christ, this priceless gift of peace so that we may have and share with others the fulness of its joy.

--Bishop Pursley's Easter Message

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IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Deceased -- grandmother of Bob Brugger of Sorin; grandfather of Windell Norris of Badin; grandmother of Fred Hurt of Badin; grandmother of Richard Gavigan of Breen-Phillips and of John McMahan, '58, of Michael, '61, and mother of John McMahan, Sr., '28; William Gerhard, Ph.D., '48; Marco Asturias, '58, killed with his son and brother-in-law; Sister Mary Generose, S.N.D. Ill -- grandfather of Jim Medeiros of Dillon; Albert McGann, '25; father of John Bruno, '63.

About Books.....

CHRISTIANITY IS EASTER The essential action in the sacraments takes place very quickly, Fr. Charles Riepe tells us in a recent Herder publication, Living the Christian Seasons* -- so quickly that those present are often unaware that it has ended. Such sacraments, for example, as those of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, take place within a matter of seconds, and yet the ceremony lasts considerably longer. What is the reason for this?

Well, the Church surrounds the essential event of the sacrament with many liturgical activities, Fr. Riepe tells us, in order to impress upon human beings the meaning of what is to take place or of what has taken place. "The Church acts out the sacramental event so that all those present can have some idea of what has occurred." These outward rites and gestures explain the inward happenings of the liturgy.

"Because the human mind is so limited and can grasp only so much at a time, the liturgical explanation makes the mysteries of our faith more intelligible by using words, gestures and rites to show what happens in the administration of a sacrament.

The same principle of liturgical explanation, Fr. Riepe shows, can also be applied to the Church year. Basically the Church year is one grand liturgical explanation of the central truth of our Catholic faith, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ by which the redemption was accomplished. "The Church explains this great truth by showing us what led up to and what came after it. In other words, the Church year is a liturgical explanation of the mystery of Eas-

ter: the redemption. Easter is at the heart of the Church year, and it is around Easter that the Church year revolves.

"For more than three hundred years," says Fr. Riepe, "no other feast was celebrated in the Catholic Church apart from Easter. . . The death and resurrection of Christ was celebrated solemnly once a year at Easter, and celebrated in a less solemn fashion once every week on Sunday." Each Sunday of the year was a "little Easter," just as every Friday was a "little Good Friday."

The Christian religion, then, is basically an Easter religion. The whole Christian faith is based on Easter. . . The holy sacrifice of the Mass is a celebration of Easter regardless of the time of the year. Or, in other words, it is a celebration of man's redemption.

Every feast celebrated during the Church year, therefore, has this purpose, namely, to take us to the core of the mystery of the redemption. The Church doesn't intend the liturgy to be a chronological following or a re-living of the life of Christ. Rather, the liturgy is the celebration of the redemption spread out for us over the span of the entire year.

-- Claude L. Boehm

*Herder, \$2.95, 1964

NO LOVE, NO HEAVEN

Early in childhood we learned that God is all-powerful. He can do anything. Later we came to understand that, although God can do anything, He cannot do a no-thing. For example, He cannot make a square circle. The words "square" and "circle" are contradictory words. They cancel each other out. A square circle is not a something; it is a nothing, and God does not do nothings.

This is a truth to be remembered if and when we may be tempted to commit a grave sin. No one who is in his right mind and who believes in heaven and hell, would want to jeopardize his eternal happiness for the sake of a present and very temporary pleasure or gain. Unfortunately, however, many persons have a mistaken and sentimental understanding of God. They may not put it into words, but in the act of sinning their unconscious reasoning is, "God is a good God. He will not let me lose heaven for this thing which I am doing."

What such persons fail to understand is that heaven, which is the possession of God in a union of love, and sin, which is a denial to God of our love, are contradictory concepts. They cancel each other out. Without love for God we are as incapable of possessing God in heaven as a man without eyes is incapable of seeing the color of flowers.

God can do anything, but He cannot do a no-thing. He cannot give heaven to a soul in whom there is no love for Him, no more than He could make a square circle.

But why cannot God make us love Him? Why cannot He put love into us if we are lacking in love? Here again we encounter the same difficulty: a contradiction in terms. Love for another person cannot be forced upon us. If love is not freely given, it is not love at all. "Forced" and "love" cancel each other out. A forced love is not a something, it is a nothing.

Fortunately for us, God does His best, with countless graces, to instill and preserve in us a love for Himself. He wants our love. He wants to have us with Himself in heaven. Indeed, without His help, we would be incapable of making an act of love for Him. But, however powerful the graces He may give us, there remains to us always a margin of freedom. We must make the choice. We must want to love Him, with a love expressed by our acceptance of His will. "What God wants, I want"; this, and not any sentimental imitation, is a real act of love. Our opportunity for making this act of love, this surrender of self to God, ends at death.

When a photographer is developing his films, there comes a point where he plunges the film into a chemical bath called a fixer. The fixer immediately stops the process of development. From that moment on, the film remains permanently unchanged. Whatever the contrasts of light and shadow, they are irrevocably set.

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