

Seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Newsletter

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Reflection from Vince Diestro



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As we find ourselves in the Easter season, it is a good time to reflect on the Resurrection of Christ and how he makes “all things new” (Revelation 21:5). Throughout the Lenten season, many of us fasted in the hopes of uniting ourselves to the sufferings of Christ and offering our mortifications up so that we may be filled more abundantly with His love. Though a temptation may arise once we reach the Easter season, that is to rejoice “loosely”. To rejoice is not bad in itself, in fact we *should* rejoice since Christ has risen from the dead! But I use the term “loosely” in the sense that we might become too relaxed in nourishing the fruits we bore throughout the Lenten season. Good habits we formed, cultivating a newly profound prayer life, living a more disciplined life, proper moderation of media usage, growing in virtue, etc. Thus, we should consider doubling down in our efforts throughout *and* beyond the Easter season in order to grow more deeply in love and closer to Jesus. By this example, we have been made new! This has become possible through the graces we’ve received in our faithfulness to Christ throughout not only the Lenten season, but also in our lives! We must remember that the things we fasted from and offered up during Lenten season should extend beyond the liturgical season itself.

It is important for us all to consider the good things that came out of the Lenten season and how it has impacted us. We should reflect on how Christ has worked in our lives and how he constantly desires for us to be in relationship with Him. This whole theme of how Christ makes all things new can certainly find its roots on the cross. We can contemplate His ultimate sacrifice on the cross—the greatest of all loves on full display. A love beyond comprehension. By His death on the cross, the sins of humanity have been pardoned. By His death on the cross, we contemplate on the transformative graces we have received so that we may be made new and to journey with our Lord as we strive for heaven.

So I encourage you, in all of the things you fasted from during the Lenten season, reflect on how it has “made *you* new”. Do you ever think about how His relentless love and mercy has transformed you? How has Christ made all things new in your life?

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!

Reflection from Oliver Omega



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On the fourth Sunday of Easter we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday. And we have three readings that do not seem to continuously flow from one to the next, but are indeed connected. They reveal to us how the encounter of Christ shapes and makes our life anew which leads to the promise of eternal life. In the first reading we will hear about St. Paul and St. Barnabas, preaching to the people of Antioch. Not liking what he had to say, some incited persecution towards them. Paul and Barnabas simply shook off the dust from their feet and went on their way. In the second reading we will hear about those who stood before the throne and were counted as the people of God – those who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. These were the ones who recognized Christ as their savior, who through him had cleansed themselves from their sins. Christ wipes away our sins. He makes us anew.

The center that connects the two readings is found in the gospel in the words of Our Lord himself, “my sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me”. It is in the encounter with Christ that transforms us, and in order for Christ to make us anew, it means a change in the direction of how we live. Christ loves us. He has proven it by undergoing suffering, persecution, and by dying on the cross. But the Lover does not force the beloved. If he did, it would not be love for the beloved, but a love for oneself. Christ calls and invites us. He thirsts! But it is only when we respond to his love, with our love can he make us anew.

How we respond to his love is by the reordering of our life according to his life. Indeed he is the way. In him is found the truth of eternal life, and so in him is life eternal. Christ did not abolish the law that God gave to Moses. It was, and is still the truth. But Christ revealed the deeper meaning of how to live it. He revealed to us how the external ways of following the law are not what God the Father desires, but through internal ways of our hearts and our minds. A friendship that has no interior relationship is a friendship that is shallow, outward, and skin-deep. There is no love. God desires our love. To have newness life is to hear the voice of Christ. His

voice calls to us in our hearts, in our consciences. We have to stop stifling his voice and then choosing what we want all the time.

Love is an act of the will, to give oneself. This is what Christ did. This is what St. Paul and St. Barnabas did. Love is more than just a feeling. It makes us feel good when we do good, so we misunderstand that love is just an emotion. To hear and to know Christ is to know the language of Christ and the language of Christ is the language of love through self-giving and sacrifice. Every act of love proclaims Christ. To give oneself like Christ is to submit to him and his ways. To submit to him and his ways is to place ourselves in the palm of his hand. We place ourselves in his divine providence, like saying to him, “*I am yours, my Lord, my beloved, my friend, my brother, my master*”.

Yes, it is easier said than done. Difficult times may come our way in following Christ. St. Paul and Barnabas were violently abused and even expelled as we heard in the reading. But as we heard in the gospel, Christ says “*I will give them eternal life, they shall never perish*”. Imagine total bliss, total joy, total love, total beauty, and total fulfillment. If somebody promised you that, would you not go after it? Would we not spend our time, energy, and labor for it? If we truly realize what heaven is like there would probably be nothing in the world that could detract us from it. We would yearn for it and live for it.

God promises eternal life if we hear his voice and follow him. Our Lord Jesus did when he gave his will to the Father. And because he gave himself up to the Father to glorify the Father, God the Father glorified him. Christ rose from the dead. The language of love is self-giving and sacrifice. As we receive Christ in the Eucharist this Sunday, I share with you these words from Pope St. Leo the Great: “*the effect of our sharing in the body and blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive*”. Let us ask for the grace to grow, to love, and give ourselves daily to Christ as a gift – our response of love, to his love.

Reflection from Christopher Pugh



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He is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

We have now been celebrating the Easter season for several weeks, but Christ's Resurrection is ever present. In Winnipeg, the Easter Season coincides with springtime, which for us here is a drastic shift, especially after this past winter. We have come out of the depths of freezing cold, mountains of snow, and storm after storm after storm. The trees and grass are becoming green once again, and we are able to venture outside with ease once again. The effects of this harsh winter can still be seen in the flooding we are experiencing in Manitoba and beyond, and we pray for all those affected by these floods.

Both Easter and springtime often remind me of the line from Sacred Scripture: "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:5; ESV) Not only do we have the direct sensory experience of newness of life in creation from nature during the spring, we have a newness of life in Christ Jesus through His resurrection which we celebrate for 50 days during the Easter season. A budding tree reminds me of the life that was restored to me through Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Winter often brings a feeling of dormancy and as it draws on, a desire and hope for sunshine and longer days, warmth, and a return to beautiful life in nature. This is the same feeling I often experience journeying through Lent and coming up to the Sacred Triduum. Lent is a time of penance, fasting, and almsgiving; it is a period of preparation for the greatest celebration that can be imagined. It is a time of expectant waiting

for what we know is coming, something truly amazing. And then, it is here, Easter! He is Risen! Life is given to us anew and we celebrate that we have been saved!

It seemed this year that our expectant waiting period for spring had to be extended further and further as we received more and more snow leading up to and following the celebration of Easter Sunday, but even the snow could not dampen the celebration and the excitement of that weekend. It is sometimes difficult for us to imagine Jesus' Resurrection being present to us in this moment, but we have the opportunity, through the miracle of the Mass, to be part of that Resurrection each and every weekend, and more often for those who attend daily. The Mass is a time when we not only recall the life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour, but we enter into the great mystery and participate in it, breaking the bonds of time and space.

As we come up to the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost, remember that Jesus did not simply save us so that we can sit and hold on to it for ourselves, rather, we are to share this with others so they too may come to believe! The book of the Acts of the Apostles shows the emergence of the early Church, and the fire they had for spreading the message of Christ, a wonderful text to meditate with, and to be a part of as well.

May God be with all of you during the rest of this Easter Season and beyond as well.

He is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

Prepared by the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg

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