

## From The Pastor

**Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels!  
Exult, all creation around God's throne!  
Jesus Christ our King is Risen!  
Sound the trumpet of Salvation...**

**Father, how wonderful your care for us!  
How boundless your merciful love!  
To ransom a slave you gave away your Son!**

**O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,  
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!**

The day of our longing is upon us. The longing for love in every human heart has been set free in the reconciling love of the Cross. Evil has been defeated by the truth of love, and our personal sins have been transformed in the human/divine person of Jesus. No longer must we be afraid to love, to accept healing, or offer the peace of forgiveness. The bonds of sin and death have been defeated forever in the gift and promise of God in Christ.

Grasp the truth in your heart. You are free to be and to become the person you most want to be, and whom God calls you to be. In the reality of our human condition we face many limitations, yet the infinite possibility of God not only lies before us, but literally within us. As St. Paul exhorts us, we are to be dead to our sins and alive for God in Christ Jesus. Rejoice and be free; where sin is present, grace abounds all the more.

The preceding verses come from the Exultant, sung at the Vigil on Saturday evening. This is an ancient and powerful proclamation of the beauty and truth of God's redeeming love. The mystery of this unfathomable love can hardly be captured in normal literary prose. The more poetic expression of the hymn begins to grasp the energy and catharsis of the reality it tries to express.

O happy fault, O necessary sin? What could this mean? Can sin be happy, or necessary? Indeed not, yet they are the happy opening to God's response to our fault and sin. How often have we come to a deeper realization of our need and desire for God precisely because of the burden and shame of our sin? How burdened and dreary our lives would be in the dark alley of sin if there were not the gift and the promise of forgiveness. If it were not for the weight of our sin, what would inspire and awaken us to the forgiving love of our merciful Father?

Would the Prodigal Son have ever come to know the profound love of his Father without first seeking the selfish ignorance of personal pleasure? Only after the shame and disgrace of his ignorance does he come to his senses, realizing that his Father is the resource for survival. Presuming to be accepted back as a slave, unworthy of anything more, the boy finds an unimaginable wealth of acceptance and restoration to dignity.

Would the adulterous woman have ever come to know who Jesus was had she not been caught in her poor choice of life? Her sin is not exalted, yet it was indeed the happy fault that awakened her to the power of new life in the unquestioning mercy of the divine Lord.

How about Peter? O necessary sin of denial that converted him from himself to truly live in and with Jesus. Jesus knew the denial was coming. Why didn't he stop Peter? Jesus knew and accepted that Peter had to walk this path. Jesus also knew that by this path Peter would in the end, be better for it. O happy fault, O necessary sin that gained for us so great a Redeemer.

It is indeed a mystery. A love so great that we are even saved and transformed by our very sins. This is not an exaltation of sin, but a proclamation of the effective and surpassing power of love and reconciliation accomplished in Jesus. Jesus so completely took on the human reality of our sins that in his person, human and divine, sin has lost its power to defeat us.

By the power of the Cross, our sins are not only forgiven, but evil itself has been defeated. Still burdened by the realities of evil and the consequence of sin, we can none the less go forward with confident hope. In this redemption there is no we and they. We are all sinners desperately in need of the liberating love of the Cross. Now it is completely and unconditionally ours in the desire and passion of our God in Christ.

The Resurrection is a multifaceted reality. Today we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Through this Resurrection, we are called to an inner resurrection of our minds and hearts into the surpassing mystery of being unconditionally loved. Let this truth touch you deeply within your mind and your heart, your memory and your past, your present and your future. Make God really happy today; let God deeply and fully love you as you are through his Son given for us all. Happy Easter!

Father John Esper