

Encouragement Encouragement

April 2019 – Issue 93

Bourne for JOY

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

WWW.THEHOSTAPOSTOLATE.ORG

14, GOATBECK TERRACE,
LANGLEY MOOR,
COUNTY DURHAM DH7 8JJ

thehostapostolate@gmail.com

We are moving slowly into the season of Spring but we are only halfway through Lent with all its trials, tribulations and maybe with less observance than we had hoped to keep. Already those 'we will pray more, give such and such up for Lent and contribute to charity or serve' have either been abandoned or muted. At this half way point we perhaps need encouragement to persevere and start all over again every new day. The Lord does not look at our failures but our intention to succeed and the ways that we do. We know that Easter is coming but it seems still awhile away. Henry Knox Sherrill said the following: "The joyful news that 'He is Risen' does not change the contemporary world. Still before us lie work, discipline, and sacrifice. But the fact of Easter gives us the spiritual power to do the work, accept the discipline and make the sacrifice."

Both Jesus' Death and its finality and the Resurrection somehow have become divorced to the detriment of the understanding of the living of both. We have people who place such emphasis on the Cross that we seem not to grasp the Joy of eternal life that it bought for us... or, some emphasise the Resurrection and forget that we get there, as Jesus did, through suffering and our own personal way to God.

In order to try to link the two, which are inseparable we must look closely at the life that Jesus lived and the path that he had to tread. He referred to Himself as the **The Way**. It could not be clearer than that we have to follow the path that He undertook, each of us in the way that He calls us. This will not be the same for everyone and it was not for the early disciples of Jesus. Most experienced persecution or martyrdom and this continues through the ages to the present day. We cannot fail to be aware of the sufferings of Christians persecuted for their faith in many countries of the world.

One thing that always strikes me, first of all, is that



joy and sorrow were present from the very instance of Jesus' birth. While Mary rejoiced and the Angels sang, St. Joseph was being warned of imminent danger and they had to flee for their lives. We do not know very much of Jesus' early life in Nazareth but we cannot fail to know that he was living in what would today be called a repressive regime, with a tyrannical overlord, the Roman Empire. Maybe daily they had to be aware not to overstep the mark so that they were not captured or evicted - not to mention pay heavy taxes. But what strikes me is how short Jesus' life really was. The words 'thirty three' slip off our tongues without due reflection. If any one son lived for only thirty three years, indeed my son, I would not only be heartbroken but would say how short his life had been and not complete. Yet I wonder how many times we think that in that short span of time Jesus gave us a blueprint for living and achieved wonderful things for all of us. He was born to bring us life and in its fullness. All His actions were indicators of His purpose and that is to set us free from the ensnarement of sin and give us the liberty of the children of God. We are the Sons and Daughters of the Father. So how did He do it?

Jesus did not come to overpower Rome or to form an army against it. He treated the Samaritans, outsiders, as well as the Romans, with respect. Indeed He seemed to have had a 'soft spot' for both. He uses the Samaritans often as examples of good behaviour. As for the Roman Centurion He praises him for his outstanding faith... Jesus went about *curing* people of all sicknesses and as St John points out, many more than there was room in the gospels to cite. He *taught*, not only in the Temple but often in the highways and byways of Palestine, on mountain tops and valleys, desert and lakes. He had *compassion* for the many who flocked to see Him and fed them abundantly. He was not afraid *to point out* the hypocrisy of those who did things for the wrong reasons and for fame and glory like the Pharisees but

"Why did you suffer for me, dear Jesus? For love! The nails...the crown...the cross...all for the love of me St. Gemma Galgani

equally helped those who wanted to change. To the Pharisee Nicodemus He *gave instruction*, knowing him to be a genuine searcher and Nicodemus repaid Jesus by preparing His body for burial with Joseph of Arimathea, another Pharisee. To him he also gave the words of the importance of Spiritual rebirth. *He forgave* people their *sins* and gave them hope for the future. He did *not discriminate* between young and old, men or women or children and adults, embracing each *with love*: Indeed Jesus was the ‘Perfect Lover’ for He asked for nothing in return except belief in His Way and quoted that He was The Way, The Truth and The Life. He reiterated words of the Old Testament and made a path for the New.

And what did Jesus himself get in return for all his efforts..? He was persecuted, rejected by His own people. ‘Mocked, abused and ill-treated. He knew that even His chosen ones would abandon Him. He had often to endure long journeys and have ‘nowhere to rest His head’ as He said of himself. He had made a self-offering of himself to His Father who sent Him to do what no other Man could or ever would do again. He was born into this world to show us the true way of living and **He bore** all this with the greatest and total love for each and every one of us without limit, with no reservations, with no disclaimers and no using of His power to escape.

The cross with all the torture that preceded it was carried by Him so that we could have eternal life with Him. We have all had experience of being blamed for something we did not do... Upon Jesus was heaped everything that we have all done. But he carried it. The sinless one became sin. I do not think that anyone can really envisage the agony that it must have given Him. But He carried all this out of an immense love for all mankind. He knew that for all the failings and faults, sins and errors, hatred and violence He was offering an antidote... Eternal Joy. He knew that He would rise again and He often reminded the disciples of this, even if they did not believe or understand. His rising was the promised victory.

This should fill us with a new resolve to endure in our own ‘little way’ as St Thérèse said, or in perhaps harder ways, all that Lent and Life bring us. We have the victory that He won for us and happiness forever with Him if we persevere. The *special pastor* said:

“It is only through His Passion and Death that Jesus came to the glory of the Resurrection. If we transfigure our ‘wretched bodies and make them into copies of His own Glorious Body’, the road we must journey is the one of Suffering taken by Jesus”. +

At the Transfiguration Jesus gave us a foretaste of this So steady those week knees and plod on for the victory will be ours and one day we will dance for Joy... we are being prepared for Joy. Easter Blessings to All this Easter and with love and prayer...
Halina Holman

Pope Francis

“We cannot give up in the face of evil. God is Love and He has defeated evil through Christ’s death and Resurrection”...

“Jesus on the cross feels the whole weight of the evil, and with the force of God’s love He conquers it; He defeats it with His Resurrection. This is the good that Jesus does for us on the throne of the cross. Christ’s cross, embraced with love, never leads to sadness, but to joy, to the joy of having been saved and of doing a little of what He did on the day of His death”.
Rome 2018

Easter Dawn

*He blesses every love which weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love’s
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognise the Gardener standing there
She hardly hears his gentle question ‘Why,
Why are you weeping?’, or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
‘They took my love away, my day is night’
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day. Malcolm Guite*

Feasts in April

- 2nd St Francis of Paola
- 3rd St. Richard of Chichester
- 4th St Isidore 5th St. Vincent Ferrer
- 7th Fifth Sunday of Lent
- 11th St. Stanislaus of Krakow
- 14th Palm Sunday
- 16th St Bernadette
- 18th Holy Thursday
- 19th Good Friday
- 20th Easter Vigil
- 21st Easter Sunday
- 22nd Easter Monday
- 23rd St George
- 25th St Mark Evangelist
- 28th Sec. Sunday Feast of Divine Mercy
- 29th St Catherine of Sienna 30th St Pius V, Pope

