

CHURCH STUFF

(A newsletter for Catholic cadets)

Week of 7 April, 2002

To my Catholic brothers and sisters in the Corps:

Welcome back...and HAPPY EASTER.

Hope you had a good Break and that you got the R&R which is so important.

I'm leaving shortly to do a wedding in Philadelphia, so this week's newsletter will be briefer than usual...but I wanted to at least wish you a Happy Easter and give you some thoughts to think about during this Easter Season.

The following prayer says it all, I think:

Lord of such amazing surprises!

I praise You for this great joy, too great for words,
for this great mercy of RESURRECTION,
which blots out my betrayals
and bids me to begin again.

I praise You for this YES
to life and laughter,
to love and lovers
and to my unwinding self.

I praise You for this Kingdom
unleashed in me
that has no dead-ends to growth,
to chances,
to choices,
to calls to be just.

I praise You for this RESURRECTION-madness
which is wiser than I
and in which I see how great You are,
how full of GRACE.

May the Easter Season bring you PEACE.

THINGS CATHOLICS CAN DO:

ALTAR SERVERS

The Altar Serve Ministry at Most Holy Trinity is looking for 5 or 6 cadets who would be willing to alternate serving at the Sunday 0900 Mass each week. Anyone who volunteers would be expected to serve

once every 5-6 weeks. If you can help out, please contact LTC Ragsdale by e-mail or by phone (x4628 or 446-5042).

AN EASTER THOUGHT:

Here this morning, early, a silent explosion with a blinding light.

Perhaps.

Or maybe a deafening silence, and the stone rolls back from the entrance to the tomb, the sandy soil crunching quietly under the weight of the stone.

Within, nothing.

Within, nobody.

Empty.

Only the shroud the women left him in is left.

Empty, but the air crackles with a kind of electricity.

Perhaps.

Somehting happened here.

Something happened.

We will always know that, but we will never know precisely what.

Something.

RESURRECTION!

No room to be simple-minded.

Not talking about a resuscitated corpse here.

Talking about RESURRECTION.

SOMETHING that the human mind cannot begin to understand.

Something happened.

Something.

RESURRECTION!

It happened to Jesus after he died.

Dead as can be, and it happened to him.

Dead as can be, and it happens -

IS happening -

WILL happen -

HAS happened - to us as well.

To us!

RESURRECTION has happened to Jesus, whatever it is.

A new and completely better life.

RESURRECTION is not merely a 2000-year-old happening, however.

It happens now.

We know the RESURRECTION because it happens -

IS BEGINNING to happen - to us.
Right here.
Right now.

JESUS IS RISEN!

Alleluia!
We are being raised,
and we are on our way to RESURRECTION.
Alleluia!
Dead as can be,
and it happens,
To us!!
ALLELUIA!

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

...MIDN 1/C Ken Neptun at USNA. Ken has been fighting leukemia for a year,
and it looks as if he's coming to the end of his life. Please pray for him and for
his family.
...all our military brothers and sisters - and their families - throughout the world,
especially those in areas of risk.
...all the casualties that we've sustained over the last several weeks...and their families.

THEOLOGY EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW:

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY:

EASTER meant "resurrection" for Jesus...
a resurrection from death,
a resurrection of both "soul" and "body".
And it means the same thing for us.

For him, it meant
not just overcoming death in some esoteric "spiritual" way.
It also meant that he did some "bodily" things:
He ate fish with his followers (Luke 24).
He invited Thomas to feel the nail-prints in his hands
and to insert his fist into the wound in his side (John 20).
He used his voice to speak to Mary Magdalen (John 20), and
He gave little speeches to his disciples
commissioning them to be his witnesses (Luke 24; Mark 16;
Matthew 28).

That's why a portion of our CREED professes our belief
in the RESURRECTION of the BODY.

Some people think that after death, we simply become ANGELS -
disembodied spirits.

Some people think that the human body is a PRISON
and the sooner we're rid of it, the better.

Some people think that it's better to be a purely
SPIRITUAL BEING.

Some people think that when the body is lowered into the grave,
that's pretty much the END of the whole matter.

None of this is Catholicism.

Catholicism believes that in the end,
we will be united with our bodies,
and that those bodies will be GLORIFIED (like the body of Jesus),
and that until this happens, we will not be COMPLETE.

Thomas Aquinas (a 13th-century theologian) mentioned that
after his EARTHLY death, his SOUL might be in heaven
but HE HIMSELF wouldn't be.

His point was that HE HIMSELF wouldn't be in heaven
until his SOUL and BODY were united on the last day.

In I Corinthians (Chapter 15),

St. Paul devoted some space to his thoughts
about the following question:

"What will the NEW body be like?"

He didn't claim to have all the details,
but he believed that it would be such a wonderful reality
that we would scarcely be able to comprehend it.

He compared it to a kernel and a stalk of wheat.

No one who looks at a majestic stalk of full-grown wheat
could ever imagine that it came

from a single brown dry kernel (I Corinthians 15:35ff).

The kernel of wheat had to "die"

before it could become something new and wonderful.

So for the Catholic,

the BODY is not an accident
nor a non-essential triviality.

It's an essential part of our nature.

It's destined for GLORY.

As St. Paul also said:

"Glorify God in your BODY" (I Corinthians 6:20).

UNSOLICITED SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

"But of a good leader,
when his work is done
and his aim fulfilled,
they will say: "We did this ourselves".

Lao Tzu
"Definition of Leadership"

And that's the way it is, a day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time...

and YOU ARE THERE!

That's all for now.
Have a good weekend, and remember:
You're always in my prayers.

Woodie