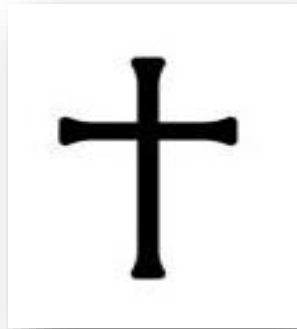

WHAT CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION MEANS FOR US



THE CRUCIFIXION ...

We see on the Cross, very clearly and dramatically, the length to which man's sin will go and the length to which God's love will go.

The Cross was the most hated and despised instrument of death. From Christ's Crucifixion however, it became the most honoured and loved of symbols - an instrument of life, redemption and salvation. How was this possible?

It is here that the greatness of God's love is revealed. What we had absolute need of but were incapable of obtaining on our own, God gave us in His infinite love and mercy. He sent us His only begotten Son, who became man in order to offer Himself upon the Cross as a sacrifice in our place. This He did that we might find forgiveness and salvation. St. John the Evangelist describes God's love for us in this way: "This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.: (I John 4:10).

With sadness we commemorate His death on Holy Friday. We know very well that it was because of our sins that He was nailed to the Cross. His death was the terrible price that had to be paid for our salvation. And so, we preach the "Crucified Christ."

But the story does not end on the Cross

If it had been the end then sin would have won and death would have triumphed. From the cross we move to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea - there we behold the Resurrection and the Resurrection is proof that all that man can do cannot destroy the Love of God, that the love of God is not only sacrificial, it is triumphant. It suffers, but it also conquers. It dies, but it destroys death forever.



THE RESURRECTION ...

The Resurrection of Christ is the single cosmic event which gives meaning, purpose and hope to all humanity.

Without the reality of Christ's Resurrection, the period of Lent, as beautiful as it is, would be nothing more than an empty and formalistic ritual. As St. Paul writes: "If Christ has not been raised from death, then our faith is a delusion and we are still lost in our sins . . . But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised." (I Corinthians 15: 17-20).

Though I may fall into sin again and again because of human weakness, I will never give up. I will never lose hope, because my Saviour lives! And He proclaims: '.... him who comes to me I will not cast out.' (John 6:37).

So many times we are deeply troubled as we see people in pain and suffering. We read about wars, floods, earthquakes and famines. These tragedies are real. And we often cry out in agony: "Why, my God, why?"

The Resurrection is the only hope! There is no tragedy in the eyes of God. There is no death. "Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal." The deep darkness of all human sufferings is totally dispelled by the brilliant light that emanates from the tomb of Christ! We proclaim triumphantly with St. Paul: 'I consider that the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed to us.' (Romans 8: 18).

In sin there is death; in holiness there is life. And the life of Christ transforms our life.

Our Lord Jesus became poor that we might become rich. Our Lord Jesus Christ emptied Himself that we might be fulfilled through His saving Crucifixion and Resurrection.

What is required of us ?

A genuine response to God involving faith, repentance and obedience.

FAITH is the acceptance of the Gospel, that is, acknowledgment of Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

REPENTANCE is a thorough conversion of the mind and heart to Christ, with sincere confession of sins through the Sacrament of Confession, so that He may forgive them and reconcile us to God.

OBEDIENCE is the willing use of one's total inner and outer resources toward the building up of a life worthy of Christ.

That we may stumble and fall do not so much matter because God lovingly forgives us and teaches us precious lessons through our shortcomings. What does matter is that we turn to Christ as often as we fall, tell Him everything about everything in prayer, trust Him for strength and guidance, and learn daily dependence on Him. As we keep our eyes on Him, and united with Him in prayer and sacrament. He renews our lives in the course of daily tasks and responsibilities by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we pray in the Liturgy, we must give ourselves and each other and our whole life to Christ, entrusting ourselves to Him and placing our lives in His Hands.

As a Church Father has written : For the believer Christ is all.

CHRIST IS RISEN !
*Christ is risen from the dead
by death trampling upon death
and granting life to those in the tombs.*

