

Jubilate

John 16:16-22

“No one will take your joy from you.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ gives the world joy in His death and He gives the believer joy in His resurrection.

The world hates Christ. Satan, the ruler of this world, hates Christ. This is why Jesus says that the world would rejoice at His death.

God is your Creator. As your Creator, God puts demands on you. You owe Him your allegiance. You owe Him your obedience. As do all men. But as God says through the Apostle Paul, “For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.” (Rom 1:21-22) Fools hate to have their foolishness brought to light. Fools hate to be judged.

Jesus is the righteous judge who will return and judge the living and the dead. When the Judge of all creation hung on the cross, the world rejoiced. Death is the judgment against sin. When the Judge of judges is judged with sin and put to death, the world rejoices. For then it has every excuse to continue in its sinful behavior.

The wicked in the world are “filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.” (Rom 1:29-32)

A perfect example of this is the Obergefell decision on June 26, 2015. When the Supreme Court wrongfully determined that so called "same-sex" marriage was legal, the world celebrated. There was a big parade in Washington, D.C. to celebrate. This was not actually about so-called "same-sex" marriage, but about the legitimization of homosexuality. The world celebrated. During this celebration, many clergy who visibly wear the office of Christ, were treated shamefully. They were mocked and spit upon.

Homosexuality is a sin. God calls it an abomination. Sex is reserved between a man and a woman who are bound together by the sacred vow of matrimony. Anything outside of the boundary set by God is an abomination. When you participate in or encourage no-fault divorce, you are participating in the abomination of Obergefell. When you participate in or encourage the practice of abortion, you are participating in the abomination of Obergefell. When you participate in or encourage pornography, you are participating in the abomination of Obergefell. All sexual sin is an abomination to God, the righteous judge. When you rejoice in any kind of sexual sin, you are rejoicing with the world that Christ was dead. "And do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." (Gal 6:7)

The world has joy that Christ died, but the Christian has sorrow. The Christian knows that he is a poor, miserable sinner. The Christian knows that he needs a savior. The Christian knows that his savior is Jesus Christ. The apostles knew that Jesus was the Messiah who would save them. They found much joy in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus knew that He must die to save the world and He warns His disciples that they will not see Him for a little while. They would be filled with sorrow. But their sorrow would only last for a little while.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluiah.

The joy of Easter is the joy of Christ's resurrection from the dead. The joy of Easter is the joy in the forgiveness of sins. The joy of Easter is the joy of peace with God. The joy of Easter is the joy in your resurrection of the dead.

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. In Christ all shall be made alive!" (1 Cor 15:14, 17, 20a, 22b)

We join with the Psalmist and "make a joyful noise to the Lord!" (Ps 100:1) The hymns today are easy to sing as funeral dirges and that's a crime! These are joyful hymns celebrating our Lord's victory over sin, death, and the devil. We have nothing to fear. We have the joy of our Lord.

And Jesus promises you that the joy of the Lord cannot be taken from you!

Christ's resurrection is an historical fact. It cannot be undone. Jesus is not just encouraging the apostles with today's Gospel. He's encouraging you. There'll be times you feel sorrow instead of joy. There'll be times you will feel like Christ is not risen from the dead. There will be times of suffering.

Peter warns you in our Epistle reading today to not give into the passions of the flesh because they war against your eternal soul. (1 Peter 2:11-20) When you give into lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, or pride, you'll suffer the temporal consequences. Suffering because of your sin is not righteous suffering. There is no joy in sin. There's only sorrow. If you don't repent from these sins, you'll suffer the eternal consequences. This would result in eternal sorrow!

Repent! God died for these sins.

There's no sin that isn't covered by His blood. Jesus turns the sorrow of your sin into eternal joy. He may or may not remove the earthly consequences of your sin. Like Paul, you may need them to keep you humble. Be of good courage, if you do suffer here for the consequence of your sin, it will only last a little while. Christ will come again and change you in the twinkling of an eye and you will suffer no longer!

Peter also encourages you to have joy in your sufferings. Righteous sufferings, that is. (1 Peter 4:13) You belong to Christ. Christ the righteous Judge is now Christ your beloved Brother. You will suffer because of this. When the world sees Christ in you, you'll suffer. The world sees Christ in you when you turn the other cheek and reward evil with good. The world sees Christ in you when you offer repentance and forgiveness of sins and not judgment. The world sees Christ in you when you are meek and not proud. You'll suffer because of this. Some will suffer a little and some will suffer greatly, even to the point of death. But be of good cheer. It will only be for a little while. For a little while, you will be counted worthy to share in Christ's suffering. Your brother Christ will come again and you'll receive eternal rewards.

For a little while Christ was dead and laid in a tomb. After a little while Christ was raised from the dead and can never die again. For a little while the world rejoices in evil. After a little while, Christ will come and restore all things so that evil will no longer exist. After a little while you'll be raised from the dead and enjoy eternal life with your dear Brother in glory.

In Jesus' name. Amen.