

~ The Epistle ~

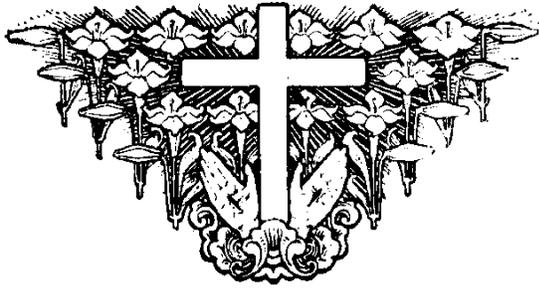
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THE MOST REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, ARCHBISHOP AND RECTOR



*Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!*

THE ancient Easter proclamation sounds out again throughout the Church. Christ is risen! Easter breaks forth with a joy unmatched. We have new hope and new life -- eternal life! We will see again those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, in a life that will know no end. Love has triumphed over hatred, truth over lies, life over death. Our Lenten fast is over, we have walked the way of Calvary and beheld the empty tomb. It is Eastertide once more!

The liturgy of Easter is rich in symbolism and Christian tradition. In the darkness of the empty tomb, in the darkness of a fallen world, in the darkness of the heart of man a Light shines forth -- it is the Light of Christ. The hour of darkness is over; now is the hour of salvation.

In the Paschal Triduum we have heard anew the ancient prophecies of Holy Scripture and listened to the moving words of the *Exultet*, the age-old Proclamation of Easter, revealing to us God's plan of salvation -- now made real for us in the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour Christ. The Paschal Candle burns brightly again in the midst of the sanctuary; and with a joy which has filled our hearts and lifted our voices, we have sung the triumphant hymn: 'Gloria be to God...'

There is no Season greater than that of Easter in all the Christian year. Christmas heralded the Word made flesh, Epiphany the manifestation of God to the nations; Lent, the depth of God's love for His people; and Easter, our salvation from sin and death in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ours is an Easter Faith; we are an Easter people. During the fifty days of Easter let us celebrate the joyous fact of our redemption. Let us live as people charged with the spirit of the Risen Christ, eager to spread the good news of salvation. Let us share with all we meet the hope that is ours as Christians. It will be through our faithful witness to Christ crucified and risen that others will come to know Jesus and the power of the Cross.

Each Easter, the peace and power of the Resurrection is renewed. The Church is enlivened again, empowered with the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Before us lies the world in all its sin and misery, its false hopes and deluded joys. But as the Church Militant we advance upon this world with power and faith; proclaiming to it the message of salvation, in the joy and peace of the Resurrection.

As the disciples of Christ went forth into their world and communities to speak of the Risen Jesus, we too need to go out to our neighbours, our friends, family, co-workers, and witness to them our faith in Christ; extending an invitation to join us in the worship and praise of God this Eastertide.

May our Cathedral Parish be blessed in this Easter Season with a faith renewed and an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. May we continue to grow in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

+Shane B. Janzen

**The Paschal Homily of
St. John Chrysostom (AD 347-407)
Patriarch of Constantinople**

IF anyone be devout and a lover of God,
let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant
Feast of Feasts!

If anyone is a wise servant, let him rejoice and enter into the joy of his Lord. If anyone has wearied himself in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If anyone has labored from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay. For the Lord is gracious, and receives the last even as the first; He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has labored from the first. He has mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; to the one He gives, and to the other He is gracious. He both honors the work, and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and whether first or last receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the Day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fattened; let no one go forth hungry!

Let all partake of the Feast of Faith.
Let all the riches of goodness.
Let no one lament his poverty, for the Universal Kingdom has been revealed.
Let no one mourn his transgressions, for Pardon has dawned from the Tomb!
Let no one fear Death, for the Savior's death has set us free!

He that was taken by Death has annihilated it! He descended into Hell, and took Hell captive! He embittered it when it tasted of His Flesh! And anticipating this Isaiah exclaimed, "Hell was embittered when it encountered thee in the lower regions." [Cf. Is. 14:9] It was embittered, for it was abolished! It was embittered, for it was mocked!

It was embittered, for it was purged! It was embittered, for it was despoiled!
It was embittered, for it was bound in chains!

It took a body, and face to face met God! It took earth, and encountered Heaven! It took what it saw, but crumbled before what it had not seen!

"O Death, where is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory?" [cf. I Cor. 15:55]

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown!
Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!
Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is risen, and life reigns!
Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the tombs!

For Christ being risen from the dead, has become the firstfruits of them that slept.
[I Cor.15:20]

To him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

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IF EASTER BE NOT TRUE

by Henry H. Barstow

If Easter be not true,
Then all the lilies low must lie;
The Flanders poppies fade and die;
The spring must lose her fairest bloom
For Christ were still within the tomb
If Easter be not true.

If Easter be not true,
The faith must mount on broken wing;
Then hope no more immortal spring;
Then love must lose her mighty urge;
Life prove a phantom, death a dirge
If Easter be not true.

If Easter be not true,
'Twere foolishness the cross to bear;
He died in vain Who suffered there;
What matter though we laugh or cry,
Be good or evil, live or die,
If Easter be not true?

If Easter be not true
But it is true, and Christ is risen!
And mortal spirit from its prison
Of sin and death with Him may rise!
Worth while the struggle, sure the prize,
Since Easter, aye, is true!

JESUS CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Perhaps one of the best known and most loved of all passages in the Bible is that of the 23rd Psalm. On the Second Sunday in Eastertide, the Church celebrates 'Good Shepherd Sunday'. Here is a meditation on Psalm 23 focusing upon Jesus as the Shepherd of our souls.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

If you travel in the Middle East, or through the hillsides of Italy and Spain, you will encounter shepherds tending their flocks. You will come across an area where various flocks may be sheltering in a common fold, and if you watch closely, you will see that when a particular shepherd comes to the gate and calls, a shivering movement can be seen here and there among the sheep; in little groups of two or three they turn toward the gate and edge their way through the other flocks. No sheep of another flock will move; for these know the voice of the shepherd. Later you may see them journeying, with the shepherd in the lead; the sheep following in his path. First they lift their heads in the fold and listen. Is it his voice or not? Then they hear; they have verified his tones. Then they move obediently behind him, and "follow whithersoever he goeth." Also, if you observe the shepherd closely, you will see that he not only watches over the flock as a whole but each separate sheep. Shepherds declare that they can recognize their sheep individually and thus 'know' their sheep. Christ, the Good Shepherd, declared that He knows His own and they know Him.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

In the 23rd Psalm we have set before us a day in the life of a follower of Christ; and also that of a Christian's whole life. We begin with the morning -- the sheep implicitly awakened by their shepherd's call, setting out for pasture lands. The early journey is assured; steadily if slowly the flock completes the first stage to its appointed place, and then is given rest and refreshment beside the still waters, whereby energies are restored for the longer journey that awaits.

This reminds us that as we move along life's pathways we should not only be aware of our journey and its direction but also of the resting times. In our modern hectic life we

sometimes lose the power to relax -- to pause along the way. So our Lord has given His people a Sabbath rest -- Sunday, the Lord's Day, a day of worship and a day of rest.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

Green is one of the most restful of all colours, and at the same time the most hopeful, implying showers as well as sunshine; life and growth. God not only provides for periods of rest but He gives us our rest beside still waters, or more accurately translated, beside waters of rest. The need for peace and quiet, stillness, in this noise-racked, demanding world is essential. But rest is not an end in itself. The 23rd Psalm continues:

He restoreth my soul.

Rest is a means to an end. The restored soul is expected to renew the pilgrimage; to continue the journey. Life is a movement, not a stagnation -- we can never be content to remain where we are for that would be to miss out on all that God has in store for us. The life God has given us is a journey, and an adventure worth discovering. Green pastures and still waters afford no permanent dwelling. If we are content with them and nothing else, God may have to drive us forth. (I know I have experienced God's driving force in my life -- even though I would have been content to have stayed where I was -- but had I done so, I would not be here with you today.) The new energy we have gained in our resting, has to be used -- we move on, following the lead of the Shepherd.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

The "paths of righteousness" -- these are roads and highways of our journey, the dusty and long paths of duty and service we are called to walk. The journey, however, is not haphazard. The paths lead somewhere; for the Shepherd knows the place where He leads His sheep. That 'somewhere' is the fold, which for the sheep is home. They have been awakened in the morning; they have been led to the mountainsides of pasturage, where necessarily they have been given rest for tired hoofs and weary limbs; and now it is reaching eventide, and they must take the trek again to reach the fold before nightfall. The Shepherd leads his flock along straight

paths which lead back home. The honour and the reputation of the shepherd is at stake; he must see his flock safely to its fold. Christ, the Good Shepherd, leads us by paths that take us home again -- for His Name's sake; and will not lead to homeless night those who trust in Him.

We know in life that the straight path is not always the easiest way; the Christian may come across roads, smooth and inviting, which veer off to right and left; while the straight path ahead may be long and seemingly dark and unknown. Nevertheless is it that path -- 'the straight and narrow way' -- which leads us in the right way through life to God. To take seemingly easier pathways would mean that the Christian would be overtaken by night before the sheepfold could be reached, there to face the uncertainty and the danger of the unknown way.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Even if the path is sometimes dangerous and uncertain, the shepherd in his wisdom leads the way; he keeps close to the sheep, with his rod (his offensive weapon) and his staff (his weapon of guidance) ready, so that when darkness comes, the shepherd and the sheep are safely home. So our Lord, the Good Shepherd, promises His faithful that sin, Satan, and death cannot prevail; for He has walked the way before us from the Cross to the grave to the glory of the Resurrection.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

The good shepherd has brought his flock home; the imagery is vivid. It is journey's end and there is welcome and provision at the end of the day. The enemies of the flock are outside, glaring but helpless; the sheep are within and safe. Whenever you are struggling with some difficulty; when the journey seems too long and you are weary; when the spiritual warfare of this life is at its most bitter, then come to the Lord's Table and receive at His Hands the Bread of Eternal Life and the Cup of Everlasting Salvation. Our enemies, the powers of darkness, the weariness of life, the struggles of daily living, will all fade away and you will be restored.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Throughout our days, and in each of our days, the Lord continues to shepherd us along our pilgrimage. He has not left us orphaned; but has gone before us to prepare a place for us, where we will be no longer guest but family.

To be sure in our journey of life we shall have good days and bad days, but Christ will see us through; and as long as we are His sheep and He our Shepherd, we shall dwell secure. And at the end of our days, when death's dark night shall enfold us, then we shall hear His voice softly calling. And as a lamb listens for the voice of its shepherd, so our soul will listen and recognize the voice of the Saviour. He will recognize each of us individually as His own; and lead us safely home, where we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

There is the story of the Scotsman, who upon hearing the 23rd Psalm, remarked: "'The Lord is my shepherd', aye, and more than that, He has two fine collie dogs, Goodness and Mercy. With Him before and them behind, even poor sinners like you and me can hope to win home at last."

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