

EASTER 2010

Once again, we will gather. For many of us, it will be around a table filled with good things to eat, surrounded by family and loved ones. For those in Haiti and Chile, the meal will be much simpler and mournful. For the Christians persecuted in Sudan and Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan, it will be a meal tinged with apprehension, much like those in Exodus 12:1-14. For the members of our armed forces, especially those in Iraq and Afghanistan, their MREs will hardly substitute for their homes, families they wish they could embrace once again. For police officers and fire personnel, ER staffs, their meals will be less than what they would have wished for, while keeping us safe to enjoy ours.

More than one commentator on the Bible has remarked that throughout the Gospel Luke, Jesus seems to be going to, attending, or leaving meals. The post-Resurrection account in Luke reports two meals no other Gospel writer addresses: Jesus appearing to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:1-35), and Jesus asking to eat something to prove He is not a ghost (24:36-49). This is not some coincidence. The point of these narratives is to remind us of something very important.

In the very first book of the Bible, God says, "it is not good for humans to be alone." (Genesis 2:18). No matter what our circumstances, the setting and place, whatever will constitute our "feast", the great hope is that we can share the coming holydays with someone. The calendar for this year tells us that Passover begins 3/30, and that all Christians (including the Orthodox this year) celebrate Easter on April 4th.

The amazing story in Luke 24:1-35 tells us that even those who had been close to Jesus too quickly forgot His message. Caught up in their own despair, they had allowed fear to rob them of all hope. Jesus appears to them, reminds them once again of His promise, and they come to recognize Him "in the breaking of the bread."

If you are fabulously wealthy, do not pay any attention to the news, or simply don't care, then these coming days of Passover and Easter are simply days for shopping, a nice vacation to a warm place, and opportunity to sleep in. Yet, for most of us, we are all too aware of the struggles, sufferings, and deep hurt that we and so many others have experienced since last Easter. And that is why we need to remember. Remember...

...those whom we have loved and who have loved us; we have been so blessed;
...those who are much worse off than we ever will be, whose suffering is only briefly captured on the evening news, whose futures seem to promise little or nothing;
...those who, in this past year, lost someone special, and whose place at the table will be missed and mourned;
...those who, near or far away, will be guarding us and the freedoms we enjoy;
...remember Jesus who reassured us, "I am the Bread of Life,"
...the hungry, homeless, and poor in our midst who will have nothing in comparison to the feast and family we will enjoy in these days.

REMEMBER. AND BE VERY, VERY GRATEFUL.

Father Joseph A. Mulcrone, April 4, 2010