

“Easter Joy”



During the 40 days of Lent that lead us to Easter celebrations, the word 'Alleluia' is not used in our prayer. It is a Hebrew word, and the word itself exhibits a special kind of excitement or enthusiasm. We sing it at every celebration of the Mass in the Catholic church, except during the season of Lent. It is sung before the proclamation of the Gospel reading, and it sets the stage for our listening to the Good News of the Lord.

Alleluia is a joyful word and when it is sung we stand ready to greet the Lord. At the Easter celebrations, there is a special emphasis on this word and it is sung with even more gusto and enthusiasm before the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus. This joyfulness is not only a part of our liturgy, but it is also a part of our lives. The joy of this Good News, that Jesus has conquered sin and death, and has risen from the dead, is a joy that touches the very core of our faith and our being. Christians carry this joy in their hearts and it is this joy that sustains us, even in the midst of struggle and suffering.

We all know people who are filled with joy. They seem to exude a type of happiness and contentment that is envious for many. Even in the face of hardship and pain, these people share a joy with us that comes from the very depths of their being. I have known people who have shared this joy with me personally, and I think of them often. Many are known in the Catholic Women's League.

Only the Lord in his grace can give us this joy. We think the world can also, but we realize that worldly joy is fleeting and soon disappears, but the joy of the Lord continues. As Jesus himself noted to his disciples: "I have told you these things, so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" Jn 15:11. Following this Jesus challenged his disciples to "love one another, as I have loved you". Jn.15:12.

The Easter message of joy is not just a gift to us from the Lord but also a challenge to us as we follow Him. His joy will sustain us, as we love one another. People filled with joy are people who know how to love. They demonstrate this love in their outreach to others, in their concern for others, in their love for others, especially in their families. As a League we practice this joy all year round.

As we celebrate Easter with all its festivities, the food, the gatherings, the special treats for the children, and our prayer together at Church, let us open our hearts to this Easter joy and let it inspire us to love in a way that imitates the love of Jesus. That is a love of acceptance, mercy and concern for each other, a love that St. Paul says, lasts forever. Alleluia!

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