

Easter, 2018

O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the death of Christ! O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!

-- These lines from the Easter Proclamation we heard to (last) night sum up why we rejoice at the feast of Easter. Yes, we believe that Jesus truly was raised from the dead. This really happened; it wasn't imaginary.

-- But we also believe in the possibility of forgiveness, and that is what Easter is all about as well. If we want to put it in modern terms, what Jesus has done is to "reboot the computer" of human life.

-- Without Jesus Christ we would be stuck in the unending pattern of betrayal, hurt, resentment and the refusal to forgive. But Jesus has broken that pattern through his death and resurrection.

-- God's word, in the readings of our Easter Vigil and Easter Day, speak of our human stubbornness, but also of God's forgiveness and willingness to let us start anew.

-- This happened in the history of God's people, when they were rescued from Egypt through the Red Sea. Then they were unfaithful, were exiled to a foreign land but God returned them home.

-- And, when Jesus came, he took on the sinfulness of God's people, endured death and was raised by the Father. The happy fault that began with Adam led ultimately to Jesus Christ.

-- We call this salvation history, and in God's word for the Easter Vigil and Easter Day we take an express trip through that salvation history.

-- But this salvation history is also lived out in the lives of God's people throughout the centuries and even today. I see it lived out particularly in the lives of those I've seen come into the Church through Baptism and the Easter sacraments.

-- In my 40th Easter as a priest, I can recall how God has rescued many people from that "necessary sin of Adam." I've seen a man in his fourth marriage baptized and later end up leading the RCIA in his parish.

-- I've seen many people with histories of deep hurts come to know God's love and become active members of their parishes. I've seen marriages strengthened as a partner has come to the fullness of the Catholic faith.

-- In many dramatic and more ordinary ways, God's power to break the cycle of betrayal and hurt with forgiveness and redemption has been evident in those people.

-- But God also works those miracles in all our lives, if we are open to it. God knows our brokenness, but God also offers us healing. And it doesn't matter whether we have been "faithful" Catholics for many years or uneven in our practice of the faith. God offers his healing hand.

-- May we grasp that hand this Easter. May we answer the invitation to cleanse the leaven of hurt and resentment from our hearts with the help of God. For God wants us to become his pure, unleavened bread.

-- When I was young, I thought it would have been great if Adam and Eve had not sinned, and we would have been eternally happy from then on without all the sin and messiness in the world.

-- But God knew he had to give us freedom, freedom to make good or bad choices. And we have not always chosen what is good.

-- Still, God has not given up on us. He has turned the happy fault of Adam which has been repeated by all human beings into the means of our redemption.

-- Yes, Jesus Christ has done that for us. He has done that for billions of people over the years. We rejoice in that fact today.

-- May the hope of Easter penetrate all of your hearts as it has for so many people. And we can truly proclaim: *O happy fault, Alleluia!*