

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
April 4, 2021
Year of the Eucharist and Parish (Sermon #13)

“The gospel, or ‘good news’, means essentially the news of Christ’s Resurrection. The message that flashed across the ancient world, set hearts on fire, changed lives and turned the world upside down was not ‘love your neighbor’. Every morally sane person already knew that; it was not news. The news was that a man who claimed to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world had risen from the dead.” (Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli, Handbook of Catholic Apologetics: Reasoned Answers to Questions of Faith, p. 186)

Today, throughout our world, people of faith celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Son, whose life was sacrificed as a sin offering upon the altar of the cross, has redeemed fallen humanity. Our Savior, conqueror of Satan, sin, and death, now greets His apostles and followers as a victorious King robed in a mantle of justice. The mantle is His now glorified flesh. His banner, those beautiful words: “Peace be with you.” All this we celebrate today is made possible because the personal, human will of Jesus is perfectly aligned with the Divine Will of His Heavenly Father. For us to develop a richer understanding of this celebration, we must return to Holy Thursday. We must reflect upon these words uttered from a weary man whose life was drawing close towards its agonizing conclusion: “*Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*” (Luke 22:42)

Have you ever considered the “Will” which God possesses and has given to each person? We have often spoken of our “Free Will”, yet how much do we know of this gift and how it works to lead us toward knowing, loving, and serving God? A basic understanding would center around our senses. We could say (using a rough example): our will is our sense appetite similar to your appetite for food. When we are very hungry, we want food. Depending upon how hungry we are, we may not be overly particular concerning what we eat. We may be just blindly hungry and it is our intellect which tells us which items are good for us or which can harm us. The “Will” because it is a sense appetite works in a similar vein. Our senses are moved by a particular “good.” We desire this good. It may become an all-consuming desire unless our intellect can guide us to judge if this “good” is actually good for us or can harm us. Our minds can and should guide our wills, but as we all know, this does not always happen. We are all familiar with the term “blind rage.” There is an old saying which instructs us to let our intellect guide our passions, and not vice versa.

The reason I focus upon the “Will” this morning is to show what happens when one allows their wills to become conformed to God’s Divine Will. The Will of Jesus is so perfectly in tune with the Will of the Father that He arises Easter morning “Glorified.” He now has the glorified body. He is a new man perfect as His Father is perfect. This is what we are called to become - glorified, new creations alive in God. Yet, it is our unruly “Wills” which delay this transformation or, sadly, stunts it or prevents it from ever fully developing. In essence, we never reach our fullest potential in God. As we did last weekend, I again ask of you this weekend, stop, make quite time, reflect. Ask yourself honest questions to see if you are being governed by your passions/senses or are you allowing your intellect to slowly bring these passions, your Will, into balance? Spiritual maturity, holiness, can only come about when we are able, with God’s help, to direct our Wills so that God and Heaven become our ultimate goal and aim. And, we are willing to walk through Hades to see these through to reality.