

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Happy Easter!

Today, we have the great celebration of LIFE! This is the incredible gift from God, that our lives do not end with death; we have an eternal dwelling place in Heaven prepared by Jesus.

In the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned, God gave us the gift of death. What?! Death is a gift?! Yes! What do I mean by that?

Adam and Eve broke the world, so to speak. When they were created, they were made to be in loving harmony with God, with each other, with the world, and within themselves. As soon as they sinned, we see the deep damage to all those harmonious relationships. Adam and Eve covered over their nakedness, because they were afraid of being used, not loved: the relationship between humans was damaged. They hid from God when they heard Him in the Garden: their relationship with God was damaged. When God asked why they sinned, they both shifted blame on someone else: their internal unity, integrity and freedom was damaged. After the Fall, God announces that the world is now broken and the earth will not be easy to work, child-bearing will be painful: their relationship with the world is damaged.

The Tree of Life was in the center of the Garden of Eden. If, however, Adam and Eve had eaten of it after having sinned, they would have immortalized their evil. God, instead, gives them the promise of redemption, and of greater life, but this life must end, because death has entered in – not just physical death, but spiritual death. Imagine living in our world where there was no death! The evil of so many (like the Stalins, Hitlers, and Dahmers of the world) would continue on indefinitely. They would continue to use and abuse people forever (this, by the way, is Hell).

God did not want this. He said that there **MUST** be an end of evil. God put limits on evil, and so gives us the gift of death. However, God sent Christ, dying and rising from the grave, so that we now have the promise of life – Life without evil, life where sin is no more, where selfishness is destroyed, and love is perfected! This is the life we *all want*. This is the life for which God made us. This is the life that is at the heart and core of every desire of our lives.

In the death and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ – God-made-man – Jesus takes on the power of evil, of sin, of death, and destroys them. God opens the way to the unending life that we have all desired.

As we celebrate this day of Life, let us ask Almighty God for the help we need to say “yes” to life, to His love, to His peace.