

Christ Alive, Christ Present, We are Christ, Christ is us! ©

Thoughts on 3rd Easter Sunday, May 5, 2019

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Easter Season provides us the opportunity to celebrate Christ Alive in that resurrected sort of way! In the presence of Christ who was dead and is now alive we become Christ for others – especially in our daily living out in time this faith we share. Easter time takes advantage of how time comes and goes in our life.

Isn't it amazing how you close your eyes and you are there at family picnics and holidays from long ago. I can describe the pickup softball games in Lakewood Park on the shores of Lake Erie when my Dad and all the uncles were young, the Moms having more important duties like socializing while using the excuse to put food on the table, when all the cousins joined in the game – a game that took place 60 years ago. For all the sci-fi blockbusters about time travel these memories, as far as I see, make up the real time travel.

Time travel is not only about memory. It is also about aspiration. These days if you don't want to be labelled socialist you might settle on being aspirational. But that's not what I am talking about here. Here's what I mean by aspiration as time travel.

Besides being Easter Season in the northern hemisphere this is also the time of year when some young adults picture their future. Some of Jean's students are fortunate enough to be in the position of having aspirations for their future lives. Seems to me that one of the key components of such aspiration is being able to picture oneself 8-10 years forward in time, well maybe 4-5 years, and place oneself in that desired future. This visualizing has the possibility to make aspiration possible through inspiration and motivation. So, I figure that time travel to both past and future is possible.

On the side of treasuring and making oneself present in the past, when it's fortunate to have a past that we would like to revisit, we come here today to share this with friends in community. Today, as we join with them in celebrating their 50th anniversary, Mary and Joe present their piece of time travel for us to include memories that seem, as we say, like only yesterday. How often this occurs for us these days. We learned just yesterday at his Memorial Mass that Ted John, who had prayed with us here, was set to celebrate with Mary, his wife, their 50th anniversary. We join with Mary in mourning his loss. And in my family in the last 3 ½ years four of my brothers and their wives celebrated their 50th anniversary. Jean's sister Joyce, who recently passed last year celebrated with her husband, Bob, 60 years of marriage. and Jean's other sister and her husband are not far behind them. Who else among us has celebrated or will soon celebrate this golden event of 50 years?

I just want to point out that this time travelling – to both past and future – in the context of the Easter Season also gives us the opportunity to see Christ present both in

being thankful for the past and hopeful for the future. Christ present is Christ alive for us. And the only way this happens is when we have the conviction that we are Christ throughout all the times of our lives.

Easter Season also brings to mind that part of the Christian story that says Christ Alive will come again. Theologians call this Parousia to focus on what is often referred to as the Second Coming of Christ. Well, just like the sci-fi time travelling movies there's been much cinematic effort at picturing what this Second Coming will look like. This effort is often fueled by the speculative visions of the Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Armageddon make for big box-office receipts.

Speculations aside let's consider that Christ, when alive before his death, made it very clear what he wanted most at any time. We heard it read in the Gospel passage for this liturgy.

Jesus said, "This is my command, that you love one another."

And lest we buy into the fundamentalist movie that says we love one another by preparing for the cataclysmic End Time, let's look again at what Jesus did when his turn to love came around. Remember? He spoke with women not of his tribe, with outcasts and the marginalized. He fed the hungry, gathered the children, and consoled those in mourning.

And here's the real kick. Suppose that – if the speculation is correct – the end does come by cataclysm. Why wouldn't our final vision of Christ Alive be of all the memories of our loving one another? Why wouldn't End Time be the same as the times reported to us of people who survive near-death experiences? They say they see the ones they love. On 9/11 when people in the Twin Towers knew that the buildings would collapse out from under them and that their own death was imminent what did some of them do? They left messages on the phones of spouses and children, of family and friends to simply say, "I love you."

Doesn't it seem that End Time is just like that?

So, today we celebrate Christ Alive, Christ Present – in past, present, and future. We're thankful to Mary and Joe for giving us the opportunity to do our own time travelling and to celebrate that we are Christ Alive, Christ Present for each other in the love we express and show day after day, year after year.

Let me conclude with a take on another old phrase. And that is the Grace of God. With the vision that returns us to so many events of our lives let's hope that we are able to pleasantly remind ourselves that with the Grace of God we grew deeper in love and more confident in hope.

But just as End Time is not about Armageddon coming from outside this world, rather that it is about Christ Alive, Christ Present, so the Grace of God, as it turns out, happens through each one fulfilling and carrying out all that is implied and required when we say, "I love you."

A Prayer (JR)

In the times of our lives,

The memories so enriching, so sobering,

The hopes drawing us forward,

We recall commitments made,

We commit to hopes that lie ahead.

We love as you, O Christ, command

Hoping that our self-inflictions don't get in the way.

We say it is "By Grace of God" we have come thus far.

So, also "By Grace of God" may we love to the end. Amen.