

*Easter 2013*  
*Father Frank Matera*  
*This is the Day the Lord Has Made*

“This is the day the Lord has made,” the Psalmist writes, “let us rejoice and be glad.” This is the day the Lord has made by raising Jesus from the dead. This is the day the Lord has made by overcoming the power of death. This is the day the Lord has made by destroying the power of sin over our lives. This is the day the Lord has made, so let us rejoice and be glad because Christ has set us free.

On this day we celebrate what is most central to our faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This day stands at the center of our faith, for if God did not raise Jesus from the dead, our faith in Christ is in vain. If God did not raise Jesus from the dead, our sins have not been forgiven. If God did not raise Jesus from the dead, the power of death has conquered Jesus forever. If God did not raise Jesus from the dead, there is no reason to believe, there is no basis for hope, there is no need for the church; there is no reason to celebrate this day.

But this is the day that the Lord has made, and so we rejoice and we are glad because God has raised Jesus from the dead. This is the day the Lord has made, and so we rejoice and we are glad because God has vindicated his Son, Jesus Christ, by raising him to new life.

By raising Jesus from the dead, God has conquered the power of death and forgiven our sins. By raising Jesus from the dead, God has given us the sure hope that if we believe in Christ and live in him, God will raise us to new life with Christ.

But what does it mean to say that God raised Jesus from the dead? To be sure, it does not mean that Jesus returned to his former way of life. If that is all that this day means then Jesus would have died again, and death would have been victorious. No, when God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus entered into an entirely new life that we cannot imagine, a life that we will not understand until we ourselves have experienced it.

What happened to Christ will happen to us who believe in him if we remain faithful to him. The new life that Jesus enjoys will be our life if we are faithful to the Lord. For, just as God raised Jesus from the dead, so God will raise from the dead those who belong to Christ. And just as Jesus entered into a new life, so we will enter into the fullness of God’s life.

This glorious Easter Day is a day of hope for each one of us, for it proclaims that God's love is more powerful than death. It proclaims that the grace of God is more powerful than the destructive force of sin.

Are you young? Live with the confidence that the life you cherish today will grow into the resurrection life of Christ if you are faithful to your Lord. Are you old and infirm? Live with the confidence that the end of life is the beginning of resurrection life. Are you overcome by fear, are you burdened by sin, are you angry, are you resentful, are you wondering why you are here this morning? If you are, this day is for you more than for anyone else. For on this day, the Lord offers you what you need more than anything else. The Lord offers you hope, life, the fullness of life.

Enjoy this day with your families and friends. Celebrate this day with your loved ones. But most of all find new faith and hope in this day: faith in Christ and hope for eternal life.