

Christ Jesus, Victor

Today we celebrate the victory. It is the greatest victory the world has ever experienced. It is the only meaningful victory the world has ever experienced. Today we celebrate the Victory of Jesus Christ.

God knows, and so do we, that we continue to experience victories that are shallow and temporary. Perhaps the most shallow are those on the playing field of sports. The Bucs won the Superbowl, three years ago. It seems like a hundred years ago. Political victories are also shallow. George W. Bush won re-election to the presidency a year and a half ago. Judging by the way that public opinion is reported, millions of people who voted for him have vanished from the face of the earth.

In 1945 Americans danced in the streets twice in what were called VE Day and VJ Day, Victory in Europe and Victory in Japan. These victories must have seemed so permanent to our parents' and grandparents' generations. 405,399 Americans died in World War II. Surely their deaths and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations would guarantee peace for the victorious nation. But within ten years another 54,246 Americans would die in Korea. 50,000 more would die in Vietnam. Americans might celebrate military victory, but that victory has never been and will never be permanent as long as human beings run the world.

True victory demands permanency. There can be no "until's" involved. A real victory demands finality.

Today we celebrate the victory of good over evil. Today we celebrate the victory of life over death. Today we celebrate the victory that cannot be taken from us. Today we celebrate the Victory of Jesus Christ. Today we celebrate Easter.

Jesus Christ, God made Man, brought life to a spiritually dead world. Jesus brought hope to a world of despair. He brought love to a world of hate. He engaged evil in its most horrible guise, the evil that seeks to destroy the innocent for its own selfishness. He took the worst that evil could throw at him, evil's worst weapon, death, and he rose from the dead.

His victory was not just a moment of history. His victory remains a living reality. He gave us the ability to join him in victory, to live his victory in our lives. He gave us baptism. Our baptism is our personal Easter. Our baptism is the reception of the life of the Savior into our lives.

It is so easy for us, myself particularly, but you also, to get bogged down in the everyday events of the world. It is easy to go about our busy work doing things that we are convinced need to be done, but miss the big picture. We are part of the victory of Jesus Christ. He died for us so that we could be victorious over death.

On the first Sunday of Lent I offered an image for your meditation during Lent, the image was Jesus weeping over the pain that we continually inflict upon ourselves. Today, on Easter Sunday, I offer you another image: this image is Jesus laughing.

He's laughing at death. Death lost its power over him. He's overjoyed at our victories over evil in our lives and our world. He laughs at the way we have refuted the conventional wisdom of the world and found eternal life in sacrificial love.

The Lord has come out of the tomb and calls us to come out of the tomb with him.

Jesus Christ is Risen from the dead, and so are we!

"Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

Our lives have meaning,

Our lives have purpose

Our lives have beauty.

We have Jesus. We have the Lord's life within us.

He has called us out of this darkness and death and given every one of us the ability to make his presence real for others. If we just allow God to work through us, if we just strive to be that unique reflection of his love he created each of us to be, then we will come out of the tomb and live eternally.

Alleluia, alleluia! Reality has been transformed. Those who have died to selfishness have received immortality.

We live the Life of Christ! His Victory is our victory.

As the sun rises in the East to begin a new day, may this Easter, the celebration of the Victory of the Lord, bring us all a new commitment to the Life of Jesus.

Happy and Blessed Easter from your St. Ignatius Family!