

# Goethals News

The Goethals Indian Library & Research Society, Kolkata

Vol. XIX

No. 1

Bulletin

January - March 2016

## My Hope is in You, for You are my Hope

**E**aster marks the horizon of Hope. Easter Sunday is the occasion of Jesus Christ's Resurrection – the Church congregates every week to celebrate and commemorate the eternal life of the Lord.

Each Sunday is a celebration filled into the empty tomb – a conviction that Jesus as Christ is alive. And, Christ blends into our prayers the promise of Hope; of peace, of assurance, of regeneration.

The word Easter comes from a Germanic root that is a cognate of 'East', the site of the rising sun

### The Beatitudes of Jesus defines the aspects of Dying into Eternal Life

#### Dying

The poor in spirit,  
Those who mourn,  
The meek,  
Those who hunger and thirst  
The merciful,  
The pure in heart,  
The peacemakers,  
Those who are persecuted

#### Rising

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven  
For they shall be comforted.  
For they shall inherit the earth.  
For they shall be satisfied.  
For they shall receive mercy.  
For they shall see God.  
For they shall be children of God.  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

– Easter is dawn, it is a metaphor for a new beginning. Easter is a

ritual of rebirth, of spring heralded.

Death is inevitable, yet life is lived and loved. As we remain in close communion with Divine presence, the cold denial of death is defeated and dispelled by the Easterly ecstasy of celebration of the immortal Lord.



  
Happy  
Easter

Fr. J. Felix Raj, SJ



# Archbishop's Easter Message

**E**aster is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. “On the third day he rose again” is the faith that Christians profess. Two facts prove the historic event of the resurrection of Jesus: 1. The empty tomb; 2. The Apparitions of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection. The Gospels describe the event: Jesus was put to death, and he rose again on the third day!

Easter is the celebration of the victory of Jesus over death and all the forces of evil that led to it. It is the celebration of life, light and love. Easter thus depicts hope for a humanity that finds itself in the clutches of death, darkness, hatred and despair. The early Christians and Christians down the ages have experienced this hope in the resurrection of Jesus. This new hope made it possible for the martyrs to lay down their faith in Jesus with the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

Pessimism rules the world today. Men and women, young people, even children seem to be in despair. Greed, violence, poverty, suffering, selfishness and corruption seem indestructible. In the midst of this, Easter reminds us of our potentiality for optimism. It is possible to overcome the forces of evil; a new life, new beginning is possible, with God's help. It is possible to eradicate evils in society and create a new social order - but all this begins with oneself. The Chinese saying, “It is better to light a candle than curse darkness” is applicable to each one of us. There are ample opportunities to light a candle around us: a kind word, thoughtful gesture, humble service, forgiveness, encouragement, appreciation, generosity, sharing and the list can go on.

The message of Easter is life, light, love, hope, optimism, joy and all that enables us to see the situations around us in a different / new perspective, and Jesus' resurrection makes this possible. We can overcome even the greatest obstacles with God's help. Let us learn to see miracles in our life, and make them happen around us, with God's help. Yet, it is important to remember that cross and resurrection are integral parts of human existence!

Our world, especially the poor and the suffering, needs the message of hope and love, of light and life. The risen Lord Jesus gives us this inspiration. He had come to the world to serve the poor, to heal the sick, to give them new hope. When the self-righteous men did not like his radical and authentic way of love, option for the poor and sinners, they put him to death. But goodness, love, hope cannot be killed! Truth cannot be suppressed. It will bounce back to life and start giving new hope to many, life in this world and eternal life in the next!

I wish all the readers of GOETHALS NEWSLETTER A HAPPY EASTER.

+ Thomas D'Souza  
Archbishop of Calcutta

Thanks to Fr. Gaston Roberge, SJ for the donation of his 31 books to the Goethals Indian Library and Research Society.

# Easter, a Festival of Hope

By Fr. D. John Romus

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**E**ASTER, the most ancient annual Christian festival, commemorates the Resurrection of

**Jesus Christ from the dead on the Third Day of his burial after his death by crucifixion at Calvary around the year 30 CE. It is a festival of hope of eternal life destined for humankind and of the final restoration of the entire creation in Divine fullness as revealed in Christ's bodily Resurrection.**

The Easter celebrations begin with Easter Vigil on the night of Holy Saturday and continue through the night, which is followed by the Easter Sunday morning solemn worship. The Vigil ritual is suffused with rich symbols: the blessing of the new fire, the baptismal water and the Easter candle, the celebration of baptism and the renewal of Christian life, all centred on Christ's Resurrection. The Easter candle lit from the new fire that dispels the darkness of the church symbolizes the Risen Christ. It evokes readily the thought of Christ's victory over the powers of evil that conspired to destroy the fundamental values of truth, freedom, justice, mercy and goodness ingrained in human nature for which Jesus stood, and, therefore was sentenced to a shameful death of a criminal on the Cross.

But the Resurrection reveals the power of truth. It assures us that darkness can never prevail, evil can never have victory, injustice is never the end of story and that human life does not end with cremation or graveyard. Easter proclaims that truth alone triumphs. This was also

the deep-seated experience of the sages and saints of ancient days of this land who encountered the Divine mystery as truth and raised the mighty proclamation: "Truth alone triumphs; not falsehood. Through truth the divine path is spread out by which the sages, whose desire have been completely fulfilled, reach where the supreme treasure of Truth resides" (Mundaka Upanishad, 3.1).

It is impressive to see the candle lights springing up and spreading all through the darkened church as the congregation shares the light of Christ received from the Easter candle and passes it on to others. It signifies their shared faith in Christ and reminds them that, through their way of life, they are to be the bearers of the hope that Christ brought to the world. The exuberant joy expected of the feast is expressed by the Easter proclamation (exsultet), composed in the fourth century by St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan. It is an awakening hymn brimming with a quality of mystery and wonder sung in praise of Christ who conquered the life-negating forces and gave a definitive hope of fullness of life to humanity. This melodious hymn that animates the Easter Vigil candle service echoes with the universal longing for life embedded in human nature.

Easter hope would not be meaningful, probably not possible, without an experience of new life breaking through the seams of our personal and collective history. This happens when in the midst of conflict and division we turn our minds to thoughts of peace; when enemies begin to speak to one another and those who were estranged in love join hands in friendship and care for one another; when nations seek the way of peace together in human solidarity; when

understanding puts an end to strife and hatred is quenched not by blood but by mercy, when vengeance gives way to forgiveness; when an unexplained power of endurance and strength invigorates us in the perennial battle against hardship; when a glow of inspiration gives way to final self-acceptance after a long period of doubt and confusion; and when a flash of insight leads us to advance in knowledge.

Human persons are essentially beings on their way seeking to realise their innate potentialities of life in all variety. But this desire is frequently impeded by trails and deadlocks, and absurdity of death. Precisely, the hope-principle rooted in human nature motivates us to face these dilemmas. Hope is the driving power as long as we live. Nobody can live without hope, even if it were only for the smallest things which give some satisfaction even under the worst of conditions, even in poverty, sickness, and loneliness. Immanuel Kant, the most famous philosopher of the eighteenth century rationalism, who changed the trajectory of Western Philosophy by prioritising reason in pure speculative thinking, concluded in his classic, Critique of Pure Reason, that all systems of thought were ultimately concerned with the question of what one might hope in life?

Paul Tillich, a renowned theologian of the twentieth century, elaborated further on the importance of hope in his Harvard lecture on Right to Hope and said, "Without hope, the tension of our life toward the future would vanish, and with it, life itself. We would end in despair... or in deadly indifference." With all their diversity of beliefs, religions are in accord in one great teaching: human beings are immortal and their spirit comes from a divine realm and may

eventually return there. Since the earliest forms of spiritual thought, this is the great promise and hope that religions have offered to their followers, though they differ in details. Moreover, the hope-principle that is part of human nature leads people continuously to elaborate utopias. Some of these celebrated utopias that we often hear are the Republic of Plato (+347 BCE), the City of Sun of Tommaso Campanella (+1639), the City of Eternal Peace of Immanuel Kant (+1804), the Absolute State of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (+1831), the Proletarian Paradise of Karl Marx (+1883), the Heaven of Freedom of Rabindranath Tagore (+1941) and the Total Amorization of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (+1955).

Seen in the backdrop of the universal hope of humanity for life-in-fullness, the Easter hope opens up a new liberative horizon. It turns all our utopias (nowhere) into topias (somewhere in this world), because Christ's resurrection gives us in this world a foretaste, a fore glimpse of the liberative future towards which humanity and the entire creation look, sighing and groaning in eager longing (1 Corinthians 15:13; Romans 8:11; 1 Peter 1:3). Resurrection gives us a decisive assurance that life-negating forces in all manner of manifestations that lacerated life, and death itself in all its deadliness have been "swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). It tells us that the last word in our human destiny is not death but life, not annihilation but restoration. The Easter hope is not an escape from our responsibility to this world but remains loyal to it, and turns lovingly towards all that is living and alive. It leaves its decisive marking in the present by inviting the believers to follow the way of the Cross, which is none other than the way of commitment to the cause of



God as Jesus did. And the cause of God is the cause of human wellbeing as shown by Jesus at the cost of his life. Faith in the crucified and Risen Christ is a veritable call to remain loyal to the contemporary human realities and to earth. It empowers us to love this broken world and to take courageous initiatives to recreate this world more humane and secure to live.

It means that all the creative and life-nurturing endeavours, spiritual as well as secular, get thereby, a divine vista of meaning. This is seen in parents caring and nurturing their children, medical personnel who care for the sick and the dying, farmers toiling to produce food for the human family, social and political activists working for justice and harmony in the society, teachers enkindling knowledge in the minds of students, artists creating a world of beauty on the wounded earth, scientists exploring the mysteries of the world, and all who are committed, in their own manner, to usher in a more caring society. These are the signs of the new creation because the Resurrection of Jesus is the unfolding of the depth of the Divine immanence in the secular.

The experience of the Divine immanence in the persons and in the secular realities has been a

characteristic marking of the reformers of modern India. Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore emphasised that service to humanity is the way to God-realisation. Gandhiji calls God as daridranarayana [God of the poor] (Young India, 4.4.1929), whereas Tagore tells us to find God in the toiling people (Gitanjali, God in the World). Similarly, Swami Vivekananda time and again reiterated to his disciples that selfless service is an expression of God-realisation. Swamiji stressed, "It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others... You must give your body, mind, and speech to the welfare of the world. You have read -- look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God -- but I say -- the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted -- let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion" (Collected Works, Vol. VI, 288). He further clarifies, "After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth -- God is present in every Jiva; there is no other God besides that... Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed" (Collected Works, Vol. VII, 247). Easter reminds us that the Cross and Resurrection reveal the mystery of God's radical immanence in humanity, and of humanity's deepest insertion into the Divine. This Easter experience is very significant to India whose spirituality is shaped by a deep experience of the immanence of the Divine, while its existential context is marked by economic deprivation and social inequality. Hence, to protect, promote and nurture this spiritual sense of our nation in collaboration with all people of good will for the creation of a humane social order is our pastoral responsibility for which the Spirit of the Risen Christ invites us.