

The Resurrection Banishes Fear

On the Sunday following Easter, Pope John Paul II went to Turin, where he preached a homily on fear and on the Resurrection of Jesus. Following are excerpts from that homily.

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews . . . Today the reading of the Gospel according to John begins with these words.



"The doors being shut . . . for fear."

Already in the morning, the news reached the Apostles gathered in the Upper Room that the tomb in which Christ had been laid was empty. The women, who had gone "early" to the tomb of Jesus, were able to enter it without difficulty. Later, Peter, informed by them, and John were able to do likewise. Peter entered the tomb, saw the linen cloths and the shroud, placed apart, in which the Master's body had been wrapped. They both saw that the tomb was empty and abandoned.

They believed in the truth of the words with which the women had come to them, particularly Mary Magdalen, however . . . they had not yet understood the Scripture, according to which he was to rise from the dead.

So they returned to the Upper Room, waiting for the further development of events. If the evangelist John, who took part actively in all this, writes that "they were there" (in the Upper Room) while the doors were closed for fear of the Jews, this means that fear, in the course of that day, was stronger in them than other feelings. They did not expect anything good from the fact that the tomb was empty; rather they expected more trouble, vexations, from the representatives of the Jewish authorities. This was a mere human fear, caused by the immediate threat. However, underlying this immediate fear for their own sake was a deeper fear, brought about by the events in the preceding days.

It was the fear that sprang from Christ's death.

The fear that had taken possession of the hearts of the apostles, had its deepest roots in this death: it was the fear born, so to speak, from the death of God.

The modern generation of men is also in the grips of fear. Perhaps it is felt most deeply by those who are aware of the whole situation of man and who at the same time have accepted the death of God in the human world.

This fear does not appear on the surface of human life. On the surface it is compensated by the various means of civilization and modern technology, which enable man to liberate himself from the depth of his spirit, and to live in the dimension of "man the economist," "man the technician," "the political animal," and to a certain extent, also in the dimension of "the man of leisure."

Man, in his planetary dimension, has never been so much aware of all the forces that he is capable of utilizing and harnessing in his own service, and he has never used them to such an extent. From this point of view and in this dimension, the conviction about the progress of humanity is fully justified.

In countries and environments where technical progress and material prosperity are greatest, this conviction is accompanied by an attitude which is generally described as that of the consumer society. It bears witness, however, that the conviction about man's progress is only partly justified. It bears witness, in fact, that this trend of progress can kill in man what is most deeply and most essentially human.

If Mother Teresa of Calcutta . . . were present here, she would tell us that along the streets of Calcutta and other cities in the world men are dying of hunger!

The consumer approach does not take into consideration the whole truth about man — not the historical truth, nor the social, interior and metaphysical truth. It is rather a flight from this truth. It does not take into consideration the whole truth about man. Man is created for happiness. Yes, but man's happiness is not to be identified with pleasure! The consumer-oriented man loses, in the pursuit of pleasure, the full dimension of his humanity and loses awareness of the deepest meaning of life. Such orientation of progress kills in man, therefore, what is most deeply and most essentially human.

But man recoils from death.

Man is afraid of death.

Man defends himself from death.

And society tries to defend him from death.

Progress, which has been constructed by generations of men with so much difficulty, with the waste of so much energy and at such a cost, contains, however, in its complexity, a powerful factor of death. It even conceals within it a gigantic potential for death. It is necessary to prove this in a society that is aware of what possibilities of destruction there are in modern military and nuclear arsenals.

Modern man, therefore, is afraid. This fear is justified. Not only do there exist possibilities of destruction and slaughter unknown before, but today already, men are killing other men in large numbers.

A justified fear, therefore, besets the generation of modern men. This orientation of gigantic progress which has become the exponent of our civilization, will it not become the beginning of the gigantic and planned death of man?

Is not the fear that besets modern man, also due, in its deepest root, to the "death of God?"

Not to the death on the cross, which became the beginning of the Resurrection and the source of the glorification of the Son of God and at the same time the foundation of human hope and the sign of salvation — not to that death.

But to the death with which man causes God to die in himself, and particularly in the course of the latest stages of his history, in his thought, in his conscience, in his actions.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the Apostles being behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews," Jesus came to them. He entered, stood among them and said: "Peace be with you."

So he is alive! The empty tomb had no other meaning but that he had risen again, as he had foretold.

"The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." It is hard to describe this joy. And it is hard to measure it with the yardstick of human psychology. It is simple, with all the simplicity of the Gospel — and at the same time, it is deep with its whole truth. The depth of the Gospel is such that the whole man is completely contained in it. He is contained in it superabundantly: with his whole will, with the whole aspiration of his spirit and with all the desires of his "heart." He is contained in it also with all the depth of that fear of his, which springs from the "death of God" — and which springs up also in the perspective of the "death of man."

Today, the whole Church proclaims to all men paschal joy, in which there rings out victory over man's fear. Over the fear of human consciences, which springs from sin. Over the fear of the whole of existence, which springs from the "death of God" in man, in whom there open up the perspectives of a multiple "death of man."

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Parish Raises Funds With 'Loan Appeal'

Hornell — St. Ann's Parish Council wanted to refurbish the church, but didn't have the money for the work, nor did it feel that a fund drive would be a good idea.

But even with those constraints, a program was launched which has been successful in raising the \$30,000 needed for the project, according to Father Robert MacNamara, pastor.

The parish conducted a "loan appeal," modeled after programs at Our Lady of Lourdes, Rochester, and the Hartford archdiocese.

Explained from the pulpit.

'Rehab Run' Scheduled

Elmira — The Twin Tier Rehabilitation Center of St. Joseph's Hospital and the Southern Tier Heart Association are sponsoring the first annual "walk, wheel, skip, hop, anyway we can do it Fund Run," to raise money for treatment of handicapped children in the Rehabilitation Center.

The event will be conducted on a quarter-mile track on the south side of Market Street across from St. Joseph's, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 17.

and then through a mailing, Father MacNamara recounted, the appeal asked parishioners to loan the parish \$100 interest free for three years.

Father MacNamara noted that a \$100 deposit in the bank would get about five percent interest for the parishioners, while the parish could put the funds together and get nearly 15 percent. It is the interest that is the profit that will make the church work possible.

Organizers set a \$100,000 goal, he reported, although they really didn't know how much money to expect. What

Participants will have one hour to complete as many laps as they can.

Guest celebrities will be on hand to help. T-shirts will be given to all participants who enlist the support of at least five sponsors. Trophies will be awarded in various age groups, for total laps and funds raised.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Harry Ash at the Rehabilitation Center, 733-6541, extension 518.

they had a few weeks later was \$70,000, with \$15,000 of it from parishioners who said they considered their contribution a gift. Father MacNamara estimated that because of the gifts, something that had not even been mentioned in the program's description, they will reach their goal.

Some of the 500 participants put more than \$100 into the program, he noted, and there also was at least one instance where several teenagers put their money together to make up a "share."

The program's success, he commented, probably was aided by the fact that it had specific goals. The church work will be done the first year, he said, and the second year they plan to put a kitchen in the school for parish functions, and the third year the profits will be used to lower the parish debt.

They haven't decided precisely what they will do at the end of three years, he said, but everyone will get an opportunity to get their money back. Also, if the participants need their money before that time, he pointed out, they need only ask for it.

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