

FAMILY: EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF EASTER

-Fr. Kennet B Teles, Director, DFSC

We are living in a world which presents different challenges to different people. Anything can happen today in a world where situations are complex and highly dynamic. Many worlds exist within this world. The world is not the same for those who speak the truth and those who tell lies; for the rich and for the poor; for the children on the street and for those in the safety of their homes, for the police man and for the robber, for the prisoner and for those who enjoy freedom, for the faithful and for the godless, for the good and for the wicked, for the beggar and for the millionaire, for those who feast and for those who are hungry, for the movie-star and for the homeless on the street, for those who eat from the dust-bins and for those who feed their dogs with food from 5-star hotels: it's not the same world for everyone. The rich man in the Gospel went to hell because of the sin of omission. How many such rich men live today, indifferent to the pain and sufferings of those who are unfortunate, due to circumstances or because of other reasons? 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.' (Mt. 25:40) Everyone will leave this world based on what destination we have chosen in this world: Heaven, purgatory or hell.

Terrible situations like terrorism, famine, flood, earthquake, violence and riots plague different parts of the world. Innocent children are facing chemical gas attacks and terrorism. Families, communities are being wiped out by terrorists: all for the hunger for power, wealth or to satisfy a fundamentalist belief. Women are being turned into prostitutes and children are being victimized to be turned into beggars. All this is being done to satisfy greed and lust. The world is going through a terrible crisis because of corruption and lawlessness. In India, minors are getting raped and killed and women are raped and murdered. The innocent men and women are targets of the wicked and the violent. Crime is increasing everywhere and everyone is under stress. Even the guardians of the law are unable to resist the temptations or fall prey to the deception of the wicked and the greedy. Money was made the supreme good and therefore the world's primary objective is to make wealth, and satisfy the lusts and all the appetites. The appetite for power, position, respect, food, wine, lusts and the list goes on and on. More the appetites are satisfied, the more intense they become until mankind is prepared to loot, cheat, steal, kill and destroy to satisfy their appetites. The will of God cannot be that we become godless; which not only destroys the soul but also corrupts the body and mind. Catholic saints are on record that hell is loose on earth.

The Christian family members are in a dilemma. On one side, the world offers all the satisfaction of the senses through TV, movies, and fine restaurants and the fulfilment

of our appetites for food, lust, fame, power, wealth, fine and elite living, popularity etc. TV presents images of the rich and the famous and more often than not; of people who do not believe in the seven virtues of:

1. Purity or chastity; in case of marriage,
2. Humility,
3. Fortitude,
4. Temperance,
5. Charity,
6. Diligence,
7. Kindness

Being merciful is also not a priority. Slowly, the TV has become the centre of attention and life in all its fullness has accommodated injustice, oppression, exploitation, gluttony, pride and lusts. This is not the Lord's idea of a life in all its fullness since it is against the spirit and satisfies only human nature.

“Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. A person will reap exactly what he sows. If he sows in the field of his natural desires, from it he will gather the harvest of death; if he sows in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit he will gather the harvest of eternal life. So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest.”(Gal.6:7-9)

The world has exalted the seven cardinal sins and glorified them and the unsuspecting Catholic does not see the light of Christ since he gets blinded by this light of the natural desires. It is now normal to pursue these desires than to seek the Kingdom of God. Stress has become normal and our children are growing in a world where hedonism has replaced prudence and self-control.

In the movies and TV dramas, justice is normally obtained by violence. Today our youth and the uneducated imitate these ideas to obtain justice. The Church serves peoples and communities but the faithful sometimes find it difficult or stressful to obey the commandment of love in a world which is blinded by the light of natural desires and punishes those who are good and refuse to accept Our Lord as the TRUE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

St. John of the cross says, “a man who must overcome the devil's strength will be unable to do so without prayer, nor will he be able to understand his deceits without mortification and humility.”But we are living in a world where even the child is being groomed to accept the satisfaction of the appetites as normal and good. This is how St. John of the Cross describes the appetites: “The appetites are leeches always calling, ‘give more, give more’ (Asc 1.10.2). The appetites do not bring any good to a man; rather, they rob him of what he already has. And if he does not mortify them, they will

not cease until they accomplish what is said the offspring of vipers do within the mother: while growing within her, they eat away at her entrails and finally kill her to remain alive at her expense. So the unmortified appetites result in killing a man in his relationship with God, and thus, because he did not put them to death first, they alone live in him.” This is applicable to all of us since the whole world is today exposed to a hedonistic culture. A person in whom appetites dwell is cold towards neighbours and sluggish and slothful in the things of God. When the appetite is satisfied, the person becomes more burdened and oppressed since the heat of the appetite has increased and many sorrows will fall upon him. “Reason” always acts as a blind man’s guide for the appetite.

God is not an enemy of our happiness. God wants us to be happy and joyful but not at the risk of going to hell. True joy is when God and Mother Mary approve of what we are doing. That happens only when we do well and walk in love. God understands our desires, “Command those who are rich in the things of this life not to be proud, but to place their hope, not in such an uncertain thing as riches, but in God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others.” (1Tim 6:17-18)

On one hand, the Christian family is exposed to temptations but on the other side is the desire to remain faithful to Christ since Our Lord is someone who purifies us from our sins with His blood. You cannot be indifferent to such a Lord and Master who truly loves His flock to the point of death and beyond. The Lord leads us and guides us, protects us and saves us. “We know that no child of God keeps on sinning, for the Son of God keeps him safe, and the Evil One cannot harm him.” (1 Jn 5:18)

The Lord Jesus is our LORD AND GOD. Jesus expects us to obey all the commands of God:

- A. The Ten Commandments
- B. Jesus wants us to abstain from the Seven Capital Sins.
- C. The four sins crying out to God for vengeance:
 - 1. Cold-blooded murder (includes abortions)
 - 2. Homosexuality
 - 3. Oppression of the poor and
 - 4. Defrauding labourers of their wages

But what do we see in the world today? It is probably become worse than Sodom and Gomorrah because I don’t think that in Sodom and Gomorrah people raped or killed minors.

Why such godlessness is rampant in today's world?

D. This is because the important commandment of LOVE ONE ANOTHER is not followed. It is love for God and neighbour that has given the world the greatest saints. St. Bernadette says, "On earth, love without suffering does not exist. If you love, you will suffer". St. Bernadette is preserved as an incorruptible by God to prove that all she said and experienced is the Truth.

Today, love is so badly misunderstood and misused. We love cars, food and everything else that we should not love. But we don't love the poor, the needy, and the unfortunate. We don't love God and Mother Mary as they deserve to be loved. We are living in a world where TRUE LOVE is not loved. Faithful Catholics suffer along with the Lord due to this great rejection of the world towards love, truth, light, life and spirit. It is a difficult time for Catholic priests. Pope Saint John Paul II said, "The pressure from the media is so much that it is difficult for any one man to act as the critical conscience of his family". If a priest says that short skirts and immoral dressing are bad in Church and at the work place for women; the devil has introduced a counter culture which reasons out that women have a right to wear what they want. This freedom which can lead to a vice that has a lot of support from free-thinkers and drug addicts and sections of the media.

Lust is now called as love. True love is a foolish thing since it is not very profitable if you truly love. This has become the sentiment of many. Jesus does not deserve such behaviour and such feelings from His own creation and many statues of Mother Mary and the Lord and even the saints are weeping because mankind is blinded by the light of their appetites and are unable to see the TRUE LOVE AND LIGHT OF GOD.

"I have told you this many times before, and now I repeat it with tears; there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross. They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires. They are proud of what they should be ashamed of, and they think only of things that belong to this world" (Phil. 3:18-19).

Joy in all these worldly delights and temporary pleasures can bring the soul to ruin. Mortal sin brings total filth upon the soul. The world has today accepted mortal sins like homosexuality, contraception and abortion etc; as acceptable and normal. These are terrible sins and the sinner should immediately turn to Divine Mercy to beg for Mercy and amend his or her life. The faithful will lose Jesus if they don't have Mother Mary as intercessor, advocate, Mother and Queen, since the times are unimaginably evil. If the faithful lose Jesus, they will never see God for all eternity since it is only through Our Lord that we can enter eternal life.

Never before has Mother Mary acted in the history of mankind like how Mother Mary is doing in recent times. Mary is the Mother and Queen of all Families. Mary is the help of Christians. It is Mary who leads us to God since withdrawal from God is followed by sin and greater the withdrawal, the greater the danger to the soul for the faithful Catholic who is surrounded by a thousand snares in a world that is increasingly become wicked and greedy and godless.

Every family of all faiths faces all these problems. **DIVINE MERCY FROM OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS OUR LAST AND ONLY: HOPE OF SALVATION.**

We are not grateful to Jesus for His Divine Mercy even though only Divine Mercy can save us in this godless world. Our Lord sustains us and many countless things that God does for us are not even known to us. In the midst of all our troubles, problems, difficulties and temptations, needs etc; the Lord never abandons us or forsakes us.

“God has raised from death our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep as the result of His sacrificial death, by which the eternal covenant is sealed. May the God of peace provide you every good thing you need in order to do His will, and may He, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases Him. And to Christ be the glory for ever and ever! Amen” (Heb 13:20-21).

Family: Experience the joy of Easter. In this godless world, you won't be able to experience this joy without Mother Mary and her son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Experience the joy of The Resurrected Christ in your lives! Then no appetite will prevail. All you shall want is Christ for you and your family.