

Easter

Morning Glory Ministries is the cathedral's outreach to the needy. On site here we provide clothing, backpacks, shoes, hygiene products, and assistance getting an ID. I asked our workers, "What was in more demand this week, clothing or IDs?" They said IDs, but last week it was clothing. Many of the people we serve arrive wearing tattered clothes. Thankfully we receive clothing donations that can make a difference for them. I asked our workers, a little facetiously, "Are our guests selecting Easter outfits?" They said, seriously, "Yes. A number of them say they want something they can wear to church."

In this church, we don't have a clothing policy—though when the Royals play St. Louis, I have to stop myself from blocking someone in Cardinals gear from entering the cathedral. Twins fans, you're OK. My mother was born in Minnesota. On Easter Sunday especially, a lot of people dress up. We don't require it, but as we dress up the building for Easter, many people like to dress themselves up as well. Easter outfits show on the outside what happens on the inside. The faith that brightens us inside shines brightly for others to see on Easter.

Today we celebrate the rising of Christ from the dead, the event that has made all the difference in the world. It makes all the difference in our lives, too. We believe that Christ lives within us so that one day we may rise with him.

Paul's Letter to the Colossians makes this point as he looks forward to the Second Coming of Christ. He writes, "When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory." What a marvelous future for which we hope!

Furthermore, Paul's letter does not just concern the future. He explores the past and its implications for the present. In the past, we were baptized. Paul explains baptism this way: "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Christ is already in God, and our life is with Christ. We are already intimately in union with Christ in God because of our baptism.

This bears implications for the present. Paul invites us to reflect on our baptism, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth." Paul wrote this letter almost two thousand years ago, and his caution still applies. The earth craves our attention. Now, the earth is a beautiful place, created by God, and we can experience God's presence in earth's beauty. But the earth has temptations that lead us to think of what is on earth, not of what is in heaven. We may dwell more on its improper pleasures and less on true satisfactions. The earth will tempt us to gaze overmuch at human beauty, to pass time on devices rather than with people, to take advantage of others for personal gain. Paul expects something else of those who have been baptized: "Seek what is above.... Think of what is above, not of what is on earth."

On Easter Day churches and churchgoers all strive to look our best so that we and others may better grasp the meaning of these words. The resurrection of Christ makes a difference. Our baptism makes a difference. Let us strive each day to think of what is above. Then, when Christ appears, we too will appear with him in glory.

Sunday, March 31, 2024