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Easter sermon: John  
April 1, 2018

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

It is a joyful day for Christians who celebrate Easter today. The Orthodox Church is celebrating Easter next Sunday. Jesus is risen! He defeated death by his resurrection and gave us victory over death. We repeat this message over and over. We understand resurrection as the only victory over death. We believe that resurrection opens the gates of heaven to those who believe in Jesus. We have a good understanding of resurrection. But, the resurrection of Jesus means more than a victory over the physical death or triumph yet to come.

Most of Christians “live between Jesus’ crucifixion on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday” (Paul R. Dettart, *After Eastern*). Many Christians believe that the effect of resurrection is going to be fulfilled in heaven after we die. The impact of resurrection is going to be in another place, not here on earth.

My friends, the implementation of resurrection is here and now. The resurrection teaches us that the kingdom of God is established on earth at the moment Jesus was

resurrected. “ Jesus’ Kingdom is on earth, but in a different way than it is in heaven” (Paul R. Dettart, *After Easter*). Let me explain this to you.

Jesus was murdered on the cross by the political and social powers of his time. The Romans with the urging of the Jewish religious leaders crucified him because he dared to speak up against their power. Jesus challenged the structure of sin that manifested in the political and social realities of his time.

The resurrection is not only about victory over death, but it is also about the vindication of truth spoken to power. It is also about victory over the unjust structures in society. We are called to bear witness to Jesus’ resurrection by challenging the structural sins in our society. Jesus is inviting you and me to confront the unjust status quo in our communities. We are Easter people, not Good Friday Christians.

We live after Easter when we speak up against poverty and oppression. We are called to implement the victory of resurrection here in this world, here in Marathon County. Jesus gives us an example of how to resist structural sins that make people sinful.

We are Easter Christians, not Good Friday Christians. The resurrection of Jesus invites you and me to challenge sinful system that dehumanizes the marginalized and poor and hinder them from accessing appropriate health care and good education. Jesus' ministry was among the poor. He rejected Rome's political economy that exploited the Jews. He challenged Rome by feeding the poor and healing the sick. He also confronted the religious leaders who manipulated the poor Jews. We are called to follow Jesus steps.

Romans with the support of the Jewish religious leaders crucified Jesus thinking his death will stop him from speaking the truth to power. His resurrection proves that he reigns on this earth through his disciples who testify to his resurrection and continue his message; The message of love and care and protecting the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. Jesus' resurrection proves that Jesus Christ triumphed over all the forces of evil, over personal and structural sin, and death.

Christ reigns here on earth through you and me. He is our Savior and King. We are Easter Christians with a mission. We are Jesus' ambassadors. Our mission is to bring his Kingdom to the poor, prisoners, outcasts, marginalized, and oppressed. Alleluia, Christ is risen!