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Palm Sunday

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Christ Became Obedient unto Death, Death on the Cross!

The greeting I use from Philippians 2:8, is quotes a hymn older than the New Testament. What a great mystery that God would have his Son die so that we might live! Let us think about how loving the Father is that he would want this, and how loving of the Father is the Son for wanting it too! God wants you, who *is* the only you, to live and to live in him now! We know this because Jesus calls us to life with him through Baptism during this life (*Catechism* #125, 1265-6).

In charity, Jesus goes to the cross that we may live. In truth, he wants us to live because he sees value in human life – each human life. We recall that it was the will of the Father and the Son that we have life in the Trinity, even before we had natural life (John 10:10, Romans 5: 7-9). So in truth, we respect that work in each person God created, and the right of that person to live.

Our Holy Father Francis, on the 25 March Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin, that she would bear into this world the eternal Son of God made man, marked the jubilee of Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae: The Gospel of Life* promulgated on the same solemnity in 1995. A commentary on that encyclical appears in the *National Catholic Register* (29 March – 11 April edition) by George Mason University law professor Helen M. Alvaré (<https://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/john-paul-iis-encyclicum-vitae-gave-a-voice-to-those-promoting-respect-for->). For her part, Professor Alvaré **firstly** wants our consideration that the Gospel of Life, by Christ Jesus himself, teaches us that **truth always comes down to a Person**, namely Jesus Christ, the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6); correspondingly, Jesus stands for the dignity of not just his Person. Rather, in his Paschal Mystery Jesus also rises for the truth, inherent goodness, and dignity of each and every human person, with whom Jesus wanted share human nature, to die and to rise again. Christ poignantly reveals a related truth: human physiology, embryology, psychology and sexuality are blueprinted from the dignity and uniqueness of the individual, an unrepeatable instance of the human substance.

Secondly, the family is the check against individual human dignity metastasizing into the tyranny of the individual or of a mob individuals. By that the Professor means that the Gospel of Life calls us to the care and defense of each human being in our family as dearly if the other's life were our very own. Surely Catholics realize that as Christ, no one who loves his own flesh can hate the good of the life of the wife in whose flesh he chooses to share his existence (Ephesians 5:29-31).

Next week, I will consider two remaining ideas from Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae: The Gospel of Life*. For now, during Holy Week, **please consider how, in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, your actions are already sharing the life of Christ with others, and act thoroughly contrary to any choice to end human life.** You admirably take risks to your own health to help your families, relatives, and friends who have prudently isolated themselves to prevent spreading or contracting COVID-19. You intuitively see irreplaceable vulnerable persons as God's beloved. You understandably recognize the vulnerability of each of our lives in face of a new and not thoroughly understood threat to human life, and in solidarity with your family and the whole human race put your vulnerability at the disposal of the vulnerable, with whom you show solidarity. That is, you valiantly help even the stranger carry that individual's particular cross during the COVID-19 outbreak (Luke 23: 26-27). God bless you, and please remember to tell those you help that it is because Christ loves you through his death and beyond his rising that you love them.

May God, who in Christ has loved the only you unto death, help you know joy in the Gospel that is in his will to rise from the dead for the sake of the joy of the only you. May he help you know in these distressful times, that he wills you to live with him now in our mutual isolation. May Christ help you see in truth that with Christ, there is no cross without victory.

United with you in our Sacred Head and His Dolorous Mother,
Rev. Father Rolando Silva

Parish Priest