

# Sermon for Easter Day 2020

(by Fr. Ron Barnes)

Day by day, the TV, Radio, and Newspapers tell us about the Economy. How is it working? Is the GDP going up or down? What country is the leader in economics these days? Will China overtake the US? How much money are we making, and will it be enough?

Everything in our world seems geared to the Economy. From our earliest education to our jobs in industry, the news tells us how we are developing --- economically. But what about us? How are we developing?

Biologists can tell us how our bodies have evolved, but what about us? Our souls or spirits? Ourselves? That is development that is vitally important yet is hardly mentioned in news these days. The inference is that we humans are simply beings whose job is to make things, to consume things, to grow old using things. But what about us spiritually? What are we becoming? And how?

We humans are created by God to grow into the perfection that God intended for us when our bodies evolved. That is why we are minds. Inside our physical bodies there is a Spirit, which is us. We are not robots --- we are spiritual beings inhabiting a human body, and we are meant to grow into a form of perfection.

Religion is the science of spiritual evolution. And God is vitally interested in how we are doing. At first, we see that we are pretty selfish selfcentred beings, struggling to understand ourselves. But as Religion progressed in its understanding, we began to see the things that helped us and the events that hindered us in our spiritual growth. The Jews were the best people for that, though other groups in the world (like Buddhism for example) advanced in other understandings. The history of Judaism illustrates the spiritual growth of humans, with the prophets leading the advance.

But there was a problem. Selfishness, understood as sin) was blocking our spiritual growth, and our understanding of God. God needed to intervene and help us solve this problem. And He did. God came to earth, took on a human body, and showed us what life was really supposed to be. God, and we called Him Jesus as we began to understand Him, showed us first how to live in union with Him, and then finally took upon Himself the sin that we were creating, and died

with it. That was the Cross --- the greatest action of God towards our spiritual development. By His Cross, we have been Saved from our sin. The Cross is the greatest action of Love that God has ever shown.

But God was not finished. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, the Father raised the Son (Jesus) from death. Death was no longer going to be the end. A new path had been created in the spiritual development of humans, us, and a door had been opened to a new and growing relationship with the Father. Jesus had become our Pioneer showing us the way to the Father. He had become a Saviour to us all. And all we had to do was to accept Jesus as our Saviour and Lord and in that Faith begin to walk with Him each day. The spiritual development for each of us was at last a reality. And all because He was Risen and Alive forevermore.

Easter is not about bunnies or flowers but about a new path for our development as real human beings. The Economy can take care of itself; now we humans can live the life that God had intended for us from the very beginning.

With this Easter Message, we, as the Church, can bring people out of their self-centredness into a new Life, a life lived with God and with each other. A life that is grounded in the Love of God and focussed on us becoming the Saints of God. Sainthood has become our target, the end reality for our life. And with the Sacraments and the Scriptures and the fellowship of the Church, we have the means to become the Saints of God.

Easter is the beginning of all of this. Easter is God's Action in Raising Jesus from death into Life, forgiving our sin and inviting us into a new Relationship with Him. It is the greatest Event in History done by God Himself, to bring us to Him and to show that we are now free to develop spiritually into the beings created by God. The choice is ours.

So, rejoice at what God has done. Alleluia Christ is Risen --- He is Risen indeed.

(Fr Ron Barnes, aohc)