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Easter Sunday

Ed Hays | Apr. 11, 2009

Years ago, Easter was a feast of riotous joy because it signaled the end of fasting, abstaining from meat, and from doing other Lenten penances. You can rejoice today in the resurrection of Christ and in the fact that you are leaving the hospital of Lent with a healing prescription for the unparalleled drug of wellness and wholesome living. Your prescription is for Triduum, which is Latin for ?a space of three days.? This is what we call sundown on Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday evening. The Galilean pharmacist?s recipe for making Triduum is to mix a compound of three healing ingredients: the Supper of the Lord, his Passion and Death, and his Resurrection.

Medicines frequently carry the instruction, ?Take with food,? and this is especially true for your Triduum prescription. At each meal, take a moment of your time before you begin eating to relish the memory of Jesus, who by his love transformed all meals into occasions of holy communion. Before your family Easter dinner, you might want to renew an old table ritual. A parent blesses a hard-boiled Easter egg and then cracks open the shell and cuts the egg into pieces that are divided among the members of the household. Each person then eats a section of the egg in silence, aware of the Easter promise of safety. The tradition says that if later in life any member of the household should get lost, all she or he has to is remember the ritual of the shared egg. The rest of the household would then think of the lost member and their love-filled thoughts would guide that person safely home again.

Like a good pharmacist, next mix into the Triduum medicine the healing ingredient of Jesus? death on the cross. Remembering the innocence of the crucified Jesus can give us the grace to endure all the undeserved, excruciating pain that may be our fate in life. Enduring all our struggles is elevated to a state of grateful communion when our suffering is made meaningful by being wedded to the cross of Christ. Pour into this mixture a pint of Easter joy and stir it with the knowledge that the resurrection of Jesus proved that death does not have the last word! This Easter ingredient of faith that death and sin are not the end treats the great lifelong

disease that plagues us all, the insatiable cancer of sin ? that spiritual death ? that slowly, inexorably nibbles away at body and mind. Sin deforms our souls as it kills our dreams of richly fulfilling marriages and our ideals of social and religious reform. Whenever you face any deaths like these, mark upon yourself the Easter cross, the Tau cross of those who already live fully in the promised age of God where sin and death have been destroyed.

The third medicinal ingredient that completes the prescription for Triduum is the mystery of God resurrecting Jesus. The crucified carpenter wasn?t slumbering in his tomb. He was dead and decaying. In the great Easter Mystery, the Spirit of Life breaks open the stone egg of Jesus? tomb. Bursting forth from the shattered shell of this tomb-egg came new creation, a new earth, and a new Jesus who arose in stunning splendor. The power of that Easter event continues to transform the past, saturate the present, and create the future. Easter isn?t merely a holy historical remembrance; it is a sacred encounter with the risen Christ who continues to heal as the ever-gentle savior.

Today we seek healing for our Easter itch, a subterranean doubt that we shall experience resurrection because of our failures and stumbling efforts to live the gospel. Before his death, Jesus gave a promise reassuring all who have struggled to live as he wanted to live: ?This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day? **(John 6:39)** [1]. To reinforce these reassuring resurrection words of Jesus, I conclude with an ancient prescription: the medicine of a good story or parable. I am grateful to author Patricia Sanchez for the following story as a curative for the Easter itch.

After committing suicide for betraying Jesus, Judas found himself in pitch-black darkness at the bottom of an endlessly deep pit. After weeping for a thousand years in sorrow for his sinful betrayal, and now empty of tears, he looked up to see a tiny speck of light way up at the top of the pit. After hundreds of years of contemplating that tiny glimmering glow, he attempted to climb up toward the light. For many more years he struggled to scale the slimy, slippery walls of that pit, only to lose his grip and come slithering down to the bottom.

Finally, after several more lengthy attempts, he was able to crawl inch-by-inch all the way up to the rim at the top. Climbing out of the dark pit, he found to his surprise that he was in a luminously brilliant room where twelve men were seated at a long table. ?We?ve been waiting for you, friend Judas,? said Jesus, who was seated at the far end. ?We couldn?t begin until you came.?

This Easter, rest assured that Jesus waits for all of us with just as much patience and healing love. Let his all-powerful medicine of selfless love heal you and bring you to new life.

-- from *The Lenten Pharmacy* by Fr. Ed Hays

Prayer:

We praise you, O Divine Keeper of Promises!
What you pledge you always bring about,
as the glorious resurrection of Jesus proves.

His freedom from death fills us with hope
since we his disciples are promised the same.

By our baptism we have become his body,
and we rejoice that the Risen One guarantees us
freedom from death and endless life.
O God, give us the grace to daily live out
this glorious life of the risen Christ.

This week's mantra:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

? prayer from *The Pilgrimage Way of the Cross* by Fr. Ed Hays

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