

YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST...

April 16, 2006

Rev. Nathaniel R. Elliot, Jr

Since you have been raised with Christ, seek those things that are above, said St. Paul to a group of people one day. Then he wrote it in a letter to impress them further (Col. 3:1-4). The risen life is a *continuing* life. Those around us have a right to expect that we who call ourselves Christians will be interested in the things that are above, the higher, the *permanent* interests of life. Just as assuredly, God has a right to expect that he will find us *faithful* to a higher plane, drawing upon him for the resources of life, without which we cannot hope to reach that higher plane.

Do we *really* have an interest in the continuing life? How *real* is it for us? I know in a general way the value of insulin to someone afflicted with diabetes, but insulin does not really concern me until it becomes necessary to one's own health. I know in a general way the value of radiation treatment or chemotherapy to a cancer patient, but it doesn't really register unless

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I myself, or someone close to me has to take advantage of its healing properties. What does the fact of the Resurrection mean to the average person? Not much until we are faced with separation in the flesh from someone we very much love....until we need the healing of a pained heart. Then we begin to wonder about the *reality* of what we have been taught in the Church, the *reality* of what that magnificent Easter hymn (#208) says about **the strife being o'er and the battle done and the victory of life being won**; the *reality* of what we say in the Creeds when we declare most emphatically, **I believe in the Resurrection of the dead**. Such experiences may arouse an immediate interest, but that interest is not always sustained. One thing we must remember about the Christian life is that to build it up and enjoy it, there must *always* be a *sustained* interest, even if that requires of us a *sustained* sacrifice. Not taking that fact seriously is responsible for many people missing the happiness within reach in the Christian life. It's not easy to

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sustain spiritual interest when there are so many diversions competing for our attention. If the Christ life stands for anything, it demands sanity and balance. It produces a poise, which cannot come from any other source. Religion must be natural, not something added on as an after-thought. It must be a part of life. It must be a *vibrant and vital* part of life. And this life must be *shared*. This Resurrection joy must pass through us to others.

It's strange how inarticulate we are when it comes to telling what our religion means to us. If we have a good business, or have made some mark in other realms of achievement, we are apt to be enthusiastic about it to practically anyone we meet. When we read an exceptional book or see remarkable movie, we can't resist sharing our thoughts about them with others. Recipes travel among good cooks like wild fire. But, when it comes to the *Good News* of the Resurrection, that *Jesus Christ is raised from the*

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dead and lives, then suddenly we become mute.....we're speechless.

Imagine yourself having a fabulous fortune and no one from whom to buy. Imagine yourself with love overflowing in your soul and no one to love. Imagine yourself with a heart full of hate and no one to hate; then imagine yourself with a soul full of faith and the reluctance to share it. We can't keep it bottled up inside and never pull the cork. Our Christian life is to be one of *witnessing* action. *Always, always, always* it is to urge us to *go*, to *tell*, to *show*, to *do*. *This* is a *living* faith, emphasis on the *living*.

What first brought people to an Easter faith? What brings *us*? It wasn't and isn't just a matter of convincing others. The disciples themselves, after the Cross, needed to be convinced. It is simply this. In the midst of overwhelming doubt and despair, the paralyzed disciples encountered the Risen Jesus. In

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this unprecedented reunion, they realized that God *had* raised Jesus from the dead (1 Cor. 1:4, Phil 2:9). God's love *had* triumphed. Tragedy *had* been overcome by victory. The *suffering servant* and the *triumphant Lord* were one. Everything that Jesus had proclaimed, everything that he had done, everything his whole life stood for had been vindicated. Jesus and the God he proclaimed were real, trustworthy, and deserving of our faith.

Our belief in his Resurrection, our professions of devotion to Christ and his Church, our meditations in the silence of our lives, our reception of the blessed Sacrament at this altar are all quite worthless unless we translate them into a *creative and loving* conduct toward others, befitting true Christians.

Since you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is and may you

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carry with you from this place today, the joy, the promise and the assurance of his Resurrection.

AMEN.