“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad” (Ps 118: 24). My father loved to hear the words of Psalm 118 sung by his young granddaughters, Claire and Laura. From the time they were toddler’s he always, encouraged them to sing their hearts out and rejoice with the Lord. Not only are they words of hope that inspired my father, but in his own way my father was encouraging his grandchildren to profess the central mystery of our faith. Easter Sunday is a day to rejoice, the tomb is empty, Jesus has risen from the dead.

Seven years ago, my father was suffering from cancer. In his weakness, he was holding on but barely alive. Claire and Laura, wanted to express their love, offer encouragement, and help their grandfather stay strong in his faith. Now grown adults, the two decided to put on a concert at home and sing their hearts out. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad” was number one on the hit parade.

This Easter Sunday we rejoice in the gift of eternal life even though we are more acutely aware of our own mortality. How many snowflakes are there on a typical winter afternoon? There are so many, that you scarcely notice any one in particular. Every day just as many people enter into eternity with hardly anyone taking notice. Due to the coronavirus, we are much more aware of suffering and death. Worldwide, 1,750,000 people have contracted the virus. And of those, over 100,000 have entered into eternity. We are saddened by the loss, but what an awesome God we have who un\textit{derwent the pain of death that we may share in the joy of everlasting life. “If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we persevere, we shall also reign with him” (2 Tim 2:11-12). “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”}

Amidst the mandates to stay in place, our movements are quite restricted. Nationwide, 17 million out of work wondering where their next meal is coming from, worried that they have no money to pay the rent. We may feel frustrated and helpless that our plans and our goals and all of our activities are on hold. But let us think about Jesus on the cross. He was completely immobilized, save for his painful breaths. He could neither preach nor administer any sacraments. He was helpless. Nevertheless, it is from the cross that he performed his greatest deed. He redeemed sinners. Taken down from the cross, he was buried and descended into hell. On the third day he rose from the dead. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

When a young child is left with a babysitter, he constantly looks for his parents. When he finally hears the parents return, he drops everything to run and meet them. Is this not also the anticipation that our heavenly Father has for every one of his children? Let us recall the story of the prodigal son from the Gospel of Luke (Chapter 15). The son, quite worn and weary from his sinful lifestyle, is sorry and wants to return home. He hopes and prays to return as a hired hand. The father has been waiting day and night, week in and week out, for the return of the son. He runs out to greet him. He opens wide his arms. He rejoices that his son who was dead to sin has come back to life. All is forgiven. The joy filled father restores the son’s royal inheritance and throws a lavish banquet. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

Earth is our temporary home. When it is our time, when we are called home, we may not have much notice. We will not be allowed any carry-on baggage. Rather than store up material wealth on earth, we should be generous with the gifts the Lord has bestowed on us that we may store treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-20). When we are finally set free to be with God in eternity, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away” (Rev 21:4). “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”
At the end of Mass, we are encouraged to bring the good news to the world. Go and see the goodness in others thanking God for the gift of family and friends. Go and see the brokenness in a neighbor who has been beaten and is lying on the side of the road in pain. Offer him help, share the gospel by your actions. Go and carry a smile that others may see your joy and wonder about the God who places that smile deep in your heart. “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.”

Source: Road to Hope: A Gospel from Prison, Chapter 28