



The joy of Easter grounds us in the understanding that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Hope Accompanies Easter Joy

Greetings!

I often go out of my way to do little things that will bring smiles to my children's faces. All healthy parents want their children to grow up rooted in love. Acts of kindness and service show children love in action and can ground children in the love of their parents. Happiness is also one of the main hopes parents have for their children.

God is able to bring light into the darkest places.

What could be the downside of this? Unfortunately—like all feelings—happiness is temporary. The human condition is filled with endless ups and downs, and even our happiest moments can be tinged with sorrow. Because I want my children's lives to be happy, I can even inadvertently communicate that their negative emotions are somehow not allowed or are something to fear.

Our culture reinforces this notion. Toxically positive slogans appear across social media and on T-shirts, mugs, and bumper stickers, proclaiming that only “good vibes” are permitted.

In a profound way, our Catholic faith proclaims an antidote to this atmosphere. Apart from sin, there was no part of the human condition that Jesus did not experience.

Throughout Jesus' walk on this earth, and especially during the passion, he experienced what we experience—a life of ups and downs, of profound joy and intense suffering. When we meditate on the mysteries of the Rosary, we see that Mary was preserved from sin but not from sorrow, even as she was most blessed among women.

Sometimes we might be tempted to skip to the resurrection, much like we want “good vibes only.” But to do so denies the reality of suffering. Whether our emotions feel good or bad to us, they offer an opportunity to invite God into our experiences. Because the whole range of human experience was part of Jesus' life on earth, there is nothing in it that God cannot transform. When we consider the resurrection, we see that God is able to bring light into the darkest places in our lives. For what could seem more hopeless than death on a cross? Yet it is the place where the deepest hope can be found. It is through the cross that the joy of the resurrection came to be possible.

How is that joy different? While happiness is temporary, joy stays with us. It helps ground us in the confidence that nothing can separate us from God's love. It helps us to know that no matter our struggles, God will be present with us. Whatever suffering we experience, God can transform it. The ground of all reality is a communion of love, and we have been invited into it in Jesus.