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## The Joy of Resurrection

One of the many joys in which I delight at Easter is to see parishioners that I do not see during the year. I am thinking, in particular, of members of families who for various reasons live outside of the state of Chatham.

It is pure pleasure to see these families all together, mostly because they seem so happy. They are pleased to have collected themselves out of this busy and harried world, away from goals and dreams and ambitions, back home to the place and substance of their beginnings.

At such times one sees and feels most especially the living *tradition*. On this particular day, in the midst of the incredibly rich and lush flowers, skillfully arranged by the Chancel Society, and with the splendid voices of the Choir, directed through the heroic work of our Organist/Choirmaster, this tradition of families assembling to worship God is panoramic in perspective.

The panorama includes generations bringing their natural affection and thanksgivings into the Church. There are many joys to be shared, as well as disappointments, and even emotional and psychological wounds. One is painfully aware of family members who are not there; those who are absent for various reasons, through difficulties, disease, or death.

And yet the panorama is one whole, like an elegant seamless tapestry impeccably woven. Something unique holds all these together. It is the resurrection of our Lord.

From the outside looking in, the casual observer might suppose that the collection of these families in this particular place is merely asocial tradition. From within the perspective of faith one knows this otherwise - as the intimations of glory!

To appreciate this panorama, we look not to ourselves but to Christ. And what do we find? Not a mere ghost, but flesh and bones. He appears to His disciples alive from the dead, known in His person, identified by His scars. Those scars were the wounds from which our life flowed.

And with His resurrection all the evils and troubles and sorrows of our lives are fitted into His redemption. With sins truly forgiven, with the great enemy of death endured and defeated, and with the prospect of

happiness in us and all about us, we praise His Glory, as in the words of the Te Deum Laudamus, "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." He is the King of Glory, and through Him we see the panorama of God's grace working in our lives. His mercies are new each and every day.

This is our tradition. The perspective of life, victorious in the risen Lord, is the precious pearl we pass on from one generation to another. It is a tradition; vital and powerful, from which we gain strength daily to continue our pilgrimage home toward the place and substance of our beginning.

And so Easter presents the joy of this panorama for everyone who will behold the marvelous procession of saints. One sees the communion for which our Lord died and rose again playing out before our very eyes. And we can say with conviction and holy hope, "I believe in the Communion of Saints, The Forgiveness of Sins, The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting." We see through His eyes and He through ours. And while we may be so busy, and our lives so scheduled, that we cannot always see as we should, the collection of families at Easter provides a true glimpse into the reality of God. And here in Church gathered amidst the scents and sounds of a garden filled with song, we know.

**The Rev. Dr. Michael L. Carreker**

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