

Christ Died and Rose for ALL

As Catholics, we are constantly reminded of the sufferings of Christ, whether it is at mass, during the recitation of the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross or by the display of crucifixes in our churches and homes. By contrast, it seems that many of our non-Catholic friends tend to de-emphasize the sufferings of Christ in order to emphasize his resurrection. Many refuse to own or display a crucifix depicting our suffering Lord and instead opt for crosses displaying the risen Lord. St. Paul emphatically states that as Christians, we preach Christ *crucified* (**1 Cor. 1:23, 2:2; Gal 3:1, 5:11**).

As human beings, it seems that we would prefer to think about triumph over tragedy – comfort over suffering. We sometimes wonder how we can refer to the day our Lord was put to death as “**Good Friday**” so we turn our focus, instead, to the Resurrection. But, it is only when we understand that it was through his suffering that we are redeemed that we begin to grasp why we refer to it as “**Good**” Friday. It’s important to remember that he rose **BECAUSE** he died. Try as we might – we simply cannot have one without the other.

As such, many Catholics around the world feel the need to attend mass only on the two biggest celebrations on the Christian calendar - Easter and Christmas. Their attendance on those days is indeed a good thing because it is *only* by the grace of God that we would even consider going to mass in the first place – even if only twice a year. However, if people would only realize that we are the family of God – his Body – they might be more inclined to attend mass regularly. Jesus did not suffer only for the regular Church-attende, but for ALL of mankind. **1 Tim. 2:4** tells us that God in his infinite love wills the salvation of all – not just some. However, whereas we are all redeemed (paid for) by the sufferings of Christ – *salvation* requires that we cooperate with the grace of God (**Mark 16:20, Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 6:1**). By staying away from the Body of Christ – we are resisting his grace rather than cooperating with it (**Acts 7:51**). We are also in direct violation of the 3rd Commandment to keep Holy the Lord’s Day.

The Lenten season, which culminates with the Passion of our Lord, as well as Easter Sunday, is a perfect time to re-evaluate our commitment to Christ. It is a time to realize that the price he paid was for **ALL** of us. But, unless we *respond* to that gift of love and cooperate with his grace, we are cheating ourselves out of the opportunity to be with him. Jesus doesn’t *force* his love on us, but on the cross, he stretched his arms open to show us the depth of his love for us. It is up to *us* to act upon it.

Before we celebrate with a brunch or other family gathering, we should take the time to remember that without the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross – there is no Resurrection or Easter Sunday.