

Fr. Romeo Homily
April 21, 2019
Easter Sunday (C)

Everything that happened in the life of Jesus is in accordance with God's plan, God's design for our salvation.

It is said that to be able to cook a great meal when you can use any ingredient you choose is relatively easy. But to be able to cook a great meal with leftovers, that is really the mark of a superior cook. The same holds true of artists. Someone working with a first-class musical instrument or fine-grained marble or the best painting material will have an easier time producing a masterpiece than if he or she were working with second-rate equipment or even flawed material. Yet, the greater the artist the more likely he or he will succeed in creating beauty out of inferior material—or, at the limit, out of a mess.

The death of God's Son, Jesus, was surely the worst mess of human history, and it was the ultimate offshoot of Adam's first act of turning against God. Yet, as tonight's celebration tells us, the death of God's son, Jesus, was used by God to produce an unimaginable good: our salvation, the restoration of friendship between God and us. That is why, earlier in this celebration, we heard sung during the Exultet or Easter Proclamation, these shocking, almost scandalous words, "O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer! Here the church is not denying that Adam's sin was a mess, for it certainly was. But, because God is a superb artist, he transformed that mess into a masterpiece and Jesus rises from the dead and humankind brought back to God.

All this shows, once and for all, the truth of what St. Augustine and many Christian thinkers after him, once wrote, "God would never permit evil if he was not strong enough and good enough to draw good even from evil. And the noted thomistic contemporary French Philosopher, Jacques Maritain, echoes the same idea but in stronger terms when he writes, "God permits evil only in view of a greater good, that is to say, by referring or ordaining this evil to a greater good". In other words, as someone said more poetically: what the caterpillar calls

the end of the world, the Crater calls a butterfly...Thus the death of Jesus, the horror of horrors, was made into a thing of beauty in the hands of the Supreme Artist.

This should teach us a most precious lesson, this one: We too, can transform the worst tragedy happening to us into something beautiful. We can do this by our way of responding to our tragedy. For each tragedy can become for us an occasion to grow in trust of God, in courage, in inner strength, in peace of soul. Whenever life serves us a mess, we can transform that mess into a masterpiece by our reaction to it. It's as simple as that. We make our own happiness or unhappiness. We can spend our lives wallowing in self-pity, wasting our time in sterile questions like, "Why did this happen"? "Why did it happen to me"? Such "why" questions lead nowhere. We will be given their answers only in the next life. In the present life, our job is to ask "how" questions, "How shall I react to this new calamity"? "How can I best use this trial to my own advantage"? If we have the wisdom and the courage to do that, we will experience joy even in the midst of hardships. For the last word in the Christian faith is not death, but life. It is not "Christ has died". It is, "Christ is Risen! ALLELUIA.