



Indiana Supplement

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Grand Prelate's Easter Message

Human traditions and God's Salvation

By SK Dan K. Patterson

Grand Prelate

As old man winter slowly begins to release his icy grip and springtime begins to overcome his grasp we can't help but think of the fast approaching Easter festivities. The longer days and the flowers are the first sign of springtime. Ladies start searching for that special Easter dress and bonnet that they plan to wear on Easter morning. Children look forward to coloring eggs and preparing for the arrival of the Easter Bunny, but what is an "Easter Bunny?" What is the purpose for coloring eggs? There's no story in the Bible about a long-eared, cotton-tailed creature known as the Easter Bunny. Neither is there a passage about young children painting eggs or hunting for baskets overflowing with scrumptious Easter goodies, and real rabbits certainly don't lay eggs. Why are these traditions so ingrained for Easter Sunday? And what do they have to do with the resurrection of Jesus?

Bunnies, eggs, Easter gifts and fluffy yellow chicks in gardening hats all stem from pagan roots historians believe. These tropes were incorporated into the celebration of Easter separately from the Christian tradition of honoring the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Although eggs, in general were a traditional symbol of fertility and rebirth in Christianity for the celebration of Eastertide, Easter eggs symbolize the empty tomb of Jesus, from which Jesus resurrected. In addition, one ancient tradition was the staining of Easter eggs with the color red in memory of the blood of Christ, shed at that time of his crucifixion.

According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700's with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs. Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left out carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry from all his hopping.

Honestly though, Easter is more than bunnies, colored eggs and fancy clothing, it's the day when our blessed Savior was risen from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

As we reflect on what the Easter holiday means and the events leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of our loving Savior Jesus Christ, it is truly amazing the amount of suffering our Lord and Savior endured so that we might live. In the book of Matthew we read where Jesus was betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver. Jesus informed his disciples that He would be betrayed by one of them and after He had informed them of this they were all very sorrowful and shocked of what Jesus was telling them. You can also feel the power of His warning in **Matthew 26:24, The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.** What a powerful message.

Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder", and as Jesus went off to pray you can also feel His faithfulness and loyalty to his Father as Jesus states in **Matthew 26:39, And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

The book of Matthew continues explaining: Then came Judas and with him a great multitude with swords and staves to take Jesus away. As we read further we find that Jesus was stripped of His garments and platted a crown of thorns for His head. They went on to mock Him, and spit on Him and smote Him on the head, and they crucified Him.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the place where our Savior was buried, and there was a great earthquake and an Angel of Heaven rolled back the stone and the Angel said "fear not for Jesus is not here, He has risen as He said". The women hurried away to tell the disciples and suddenly Jesus met them and said "**Greetings**". They came to him and clasped his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them "**Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; they shall see me. (Matt. 28:10)** I can't imagine the fear and the joy that they must have experienced at that moment.

Jesus goes on to tell them "**I am the resurrection, and the life**" saith the Lord: "**he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die**". (John 11:25:26)

And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And as it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. (Luke 24:50:51). Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they stayed continually in the temple praising and blessing God. As we read and learn of the suffering our Savior endured for us there is truly a heart-felt pain in knowing just how much love Jesus has for us.

Finally, Easter to me is a celebration of eternal life which was paid in full by our Savior on Calvary. And now may the loving power of God, which raised Jesus to new life, strengthen you in hope, enrich you with his love and fill you with joy