

On Easter, light defeats the power of darkness

written by Bishop Anthony B. Taylor |

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor delivered this homily on Easter, April 5.

Christmas and Easter are the greatest feasts of our faith, and Easter is the greater of the two.

On Christmas the light enters our world, but it's only on Easter that the light actually achieves its objective and defeats the powers of darkness — truths that are expressed symbolically by their location on the calendar.

We celebrate Christmas three days after the Winter Solstice: the night of Dec. 21 is the longest of the year. By the 25th it is clear that the days are getting longer again, the light has begun to increase, but there still do remain three months of winter during which the ever decreasing nights will continue to be longer than the days.

Jesus' Last Supper was on Passover, which is celebrated on the first full moon following the beginning of spring, when the days start to be longer than the nights — and Jesus' resurrection was three days after Passover. It is only then that the darkness is actually defeated, only with the arrival of spring that we have more light than darkness.

On Christmas the light appears, Good Friday the darkness seems to have extinguished it, but today we know that God's light really is more powerful than the darkness.

In this Mass we will receive 14 new members into the Church, uniting them to Jesus in baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, filling them with God's light by giving them sacramentally a share in Jesus' death and resurrection. And now in this Mass you and I will renew the promises of our own baptism, the promises that our parents and godparents made for us years ago, the majority of us when we were still little children.

But you know, while the light of Christ is powerful, more powerful than the darkness, our share in his light, our own flame of faith, is fragile and can be extinguished, so we must care for it, shield it from the winds of temptation and sin, feed it with prayer and study and works of charity ... and especially, with the Eucharist. Jesus feeds us with the Eucharist to enable us to really live our faith day in and day out.

Through baptism Jesus freed us from the power of sin and death and gave us a share in his Easter victory, the victory that we proclaim in Mass right after consecrating bread and wine into his body and blood (as on Holy Thursday), "We proclaim your death, O Lord (Good Friday) and profess your resurrection (today, Easter), until you come again." Christ really present in the Eucharist we receive in Communion and in the Blessed Sacrament we adore, Christ whose victory over the power of darkness we celebrate today.