

IN NOMINE JESU

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Our homily for the last Saturday of the Church Year, this day the Church in this place has chosen to remember the Faith that God gave His servant Charles W Pearson, is taken from the Gospel of St. John. Hear the Word of the Lord:

*Jesus said... "I I AM the Resurrection and the Life; the one continually believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live, and every one living and continually believing in Me definitely may not die into the aeons. Do you believe this?"<sup>1</sup>*

Olivia, Chuck, Karrie, family and friends of Charlie Pearson:

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

The Word of God is that which sustained Charles W Pearson from life into life everlasting. When God baptized him with the Water and Word in 1933, Charlie was named with the Name of God. That day, almost eight decades ago, a boy died with Christ and rose to new life in Him. That is what the Word of God makes clear concerning that which God does in Holy Baptism. Through that washing of regeneration and renewal, Jesus' Word, *the one continually believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live* became a life-long reality for the man who fell asleep in the Lord on October 17 this year.

God took a boy who was given God's Holy Name, and in just a few years, granted him the wife, Livie, with whom he would share the next seven decades of life. Through the circumstances of their lives united in Christ, God brought them into the united confession of the Faith. Through that our Lord sustained them in wartime and peace, sorrow and joy, and now, life into death and into life again.

Charles, who once slipped the surly bonds of earth in B-24s, 29's and 36's as first pilot, and then, flight engineer, has now by God's grace fully slipped the sinful bonds which permeate this sin-filled, fallen creation. Your husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather is not here in the Nave. He is with our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, he awaits the day when Jesus will come again on the clouds in glory. Then, in an instant in which all who have died in

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<sup>1</sup> John 11:25-26.

the faith will similarly be resurrected, Charlie's mortal remains will burst forth from the columbarium in Sierra Vista, AZ – whole, complete, perfect, free from sin and all its effects.. Then we who may that Day be *living and continually believing in Jesus* will be caught up with the blessed that have died in Christ to live and reign with Him in the new heavens and earth. In them there will no longer be sin, death, or the devil. Those eternal realities all flow from these immortal words:

*Jesus said... "I I AM the Resurrection and the Life; the one continually believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live, and every one living and continually believing in Me definitely may not die into the aeons. Do you believe this?"<sup>2</sup>*

Right now, if, when you hear Jesus ask the question He put to St. Martha so long ago, you answer as she did, even as Saint Charles W. Pearson did throughout his mortal life, you have eternal life as a present possession. In the Faith, clinging to the reality that Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life, you have Christ, His life, in you. As you remain in Christ through the good confession of the Faith, even though you may taste death, it can have no final victory over you, even as it could not, can not, and will not, hold our sainted brother.

Yes, we here have suffered a true human loss on account of death. Gone are the days – years – of continued conversations with a man who lived life with so much joy. Tales of flying, road trips, sales calls, and family adventures are now only memories – fading faster for some of us than others. The weekends home from work at Gates and Sons Framing, to lead family, and those who would over the years become called “family,” to the Lord's services, have long since ceased. Past are the times when, through the Faith lived out in love, Charlie and Livie opened their home to those in need of God's love, even for those did not bear the same last name. The Holy Spirit's gift of hospitality lived out in their lives united as one has ended.

Yet, present and eternal is the reality that he who once welcomed so many into his home has, as of the last day of his ninetieth year of life outside his mother's womb, been welcomed into the Eternal Father's home. Charles, who, many times, through word and example, trained many people to be cheerful, is now fully living in the joy of the Lord. He whose voice once joined the angels in the timeless liturgies and great hymns of the Faith on earth, has joined their company in the Presence of the Lord. In God's sight, the

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<sup>2</sup> John 11:25-26.

one who is absent from our sight even today is one of the myriads who sing hosanna's around the Lamb and His Throne.

Hosanna, "Save Now!" is a fitting chant for those who have died and live in the Lord. Tomorrow, in congregations around the world which remain faithful to the ancient rhythm of the Life of Christ in the Church will hear that word. In hearing and chanting their hosannas, the Church on earth joins with the Church in heaven. Their prayer is that the Lord will, through the means He chose, save lost and condemned sinners. That was also, while he lived in his mortal body, the prayer which Charles echoed, through a firm, quiet, and loving faith: that is, the Faith of Jesus the Christ. That same Faith is even now repeated into your ears, into your hearts, and from there, we pray, your lips and into your life.

*Jesus said..."I I AM the Resurrection and the Life; the one continually believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live, and every one living and continually believing in Me definitely may not die into the aeons. Do you believe this?"<sup>3</sup>*

You who believe those words have no reason to mourn as the world does. Those everlasting words are of hope, and sure and certain promise. The quote from Jesus' lips begins with the Reason you may fully, completely, presently and eternally trust that which follows. Jesus begins His proclamation with the Name of God, His Name revealed first to Moses over 3,400 years ago in a language very different from ours. Jesus declares Himself to be "I I AM," the One Who Causes all things to be.

The words that follow then are the confession of God, the true, right, and good confession of the Faith. Jesus, Who is God, declares Who He is in His joined titles: "The Resurrection and The Life." Those titles, attached to the Name of God, declare Him to all whose ears are not continually stopped by sin, unbelief, and despair.

Jesus is not just a resurrection – just for himself, or one path toward eternal life. In human thinking, there are many of those paths. For some, it means naming one's children after oneself, so that the name may live on after one dies. For others, resurrection means keeping the memory of the dear departed fresh. The hope is to live through the memory of one's descendants. For still others, the resurrection is something powerful and spiritual, but, only that. But, for Jesus the Great I AM, the resurrection is powerful, spiritual, and of the body. Because Jesus died, to pay the price for

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<sup>3</sup> John 11:25-26.

Charlie's sins, your sins, my sins, the sins of the whole world, Jesus would rise from the dead. The truth that Jesus died in our sins necessarily brought with it the reality of His first self-declared titles: The Resurrection and The Life.

His second title, The Life, is full of realized promise for those who believe. Remember that which you heard from the Gospel reading today. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was mourning her brother's death. In fact, she was had been grieving for at least four days – Jesus arrived when her brother had been dead in the tomb four days. Martha had faith. She knew that Jesus could heal the sick, and stave off death. She knew that Jesus could raise from death those who had fallen asleep.

Yet, in the Faith, she still doubted. She was a product of her culture. The devout Jews of that era believed that the soul departed the body on the fourth day. That meant to her that Lazarus was truly dead, and impossible to revive. His immortal soul, she thought, had departed to Sheol, the place of the dead. Her brother's decaying body, she believed, would not rise again until the Day of the Resurrection of the Just. That is likely the reason she cried out, in her anguish, as her sister Mary, who was not present, would soon do when she greeted Jesus out of her grief:

*O Lord, if You had been here, **not** he would have died.<sup>4</sup>*

The faithful of all ages are tempted to think like that. We say, "If only I would have been there, Charles might have lived another day, or to his and Olivia's 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, or until a cure is for cancer is found." Even if we could have seen Jesus standing there, looking over the one whom He had delivered fully out of this world's suffering, we too would cry out – "If you would have gotten here sooner, he would not have died!" Grief does that to us, it leads us away from God's will – that all should live eternally in Christ – to our will -- that none of Adam's children should die even though that is what our first father's sin brought to all his descendants. Tears lead us to look from The Resurrection and The Life, to the columbarium and death. Turn from that, believe, and receive, even as the sisters of Lazarus did long ago, the Promise. Jesus said, *the one continually believing in Me, even though he may die, he shall live.*

Jesus brought first Martha, then her sister, to the reality of the Promise contained in His divine titles. So too does He bring us who grieve to the life that comes. Jesus' Word brings the Life. His Word brings the Faith.

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<sup>4</sup> John 11:21b.

His Word brings this right, true, and good confession from those who grasp His Word by His Faith:

*I believe that You remain the Christ, the Son of God, the One continually coming into the fallen world.*<sup>5</sup>

Saint Charles (I know he would have chuckled at that title during his mortal life – he was as aware of his sins as he was of his Savior) St. Charles W. Pearson believed that Jesus remains the Anointed One of God. Mr. Pearson believes even now that Jesus is the eternal Son of God Who, in time, came into the world, in our flesh, to bear our sins into death and the grave. Charlie knows that Jesus is the One continually coming into the world, even now as Savior of those who know their sins, confess them, and will to turn from them. Charles will see, with his own eyes, Jesus return visibly on the clouds even as his body is resurrected from the dead and joined to his immortal soul. May it be so for you too, in the Faith, in Christ, into eternity.

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Last Saturday of the Church Year

Memorial Service for Charles W. Pearson

Jeremiah 29:11; I Corinthians 15:50-57; John 11:17-27

November 26, 2011

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

**SOLI DEO GLORIA**

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<sup>5</sup> John 11:27b.