



Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name. – John 20:30-31

Each day of the year has something for Catholics to celebrate. Feast days, Saint birthdays, Holy Days (some of obligation), days to fast, plain old ordinary times when we are blessed to practice our faith.

In my mind ,the two BIG days are Christmas and Easter.

In our pleasure-seeking culture, Christmas gets lots more attention. Not surprising. Christmas may be the birth of Christ, but it has become a time of parties, gift-giving, decorations, parades, songs of sleigh rides and sugar plum fairies, and images of a beautiful baby in a cozy manger surrounded by shepherds, kings and cuddly creatures. (I bet it wasn't that cozy in real life.)

Easter is another story. For most folks it is about the Easter bunny, chocolate eggs and a family dinner. Only the serious practitioners of the faith pay much attention to the real story.

I expect that is because much of the real story is rather unpleasant: betrayal, scourging, crowning with thorns, dragging the cross while covered in blood and spat upon, nailed to a cross and dying. Of course, after three days the story takes a brighter turn: rising from the dead.

That's what makes Easter so much more significant in my mind. Christmas is warm and fuzzy, but babies are born all the time and we know that every one is the cutest baby ever born.

Rising from the dead is decidedly less common. Absent that amazing event, I might as well chuck Christianity and sign up for meditation and zumba classes.

But I'm not interested in jumping around to techno music. I'm a convicted Catholic and intend to remain one. And that brings me to a conversation I had a few days ago that I never expected to have.

A colleague and I were discussing how much "advance" public notice we should give of the Living Stations of the Cross planned by the Regnum Christi missionaries in New York City. We decided it was OK to alert some key media, but in the hope they might cover the event; we didn't want them to promote it to the public in advance. So...we were cautious.

Safety is the issue. I'm not talking about the look-both-ways-before-you-cross-the-street sort of safety. I'm talking about fear of terrorists.

You wouldn't think a herd of missionaries dressed up as Jesus and Roman guards would generate a terror attack in New York. Frankly, I doubt it would. But the Coptic Christians who died in Palm Sunday bombings in Egypt thought there were just going to church. A million or so Christians who have fled Syria in the past couple years thought they were just living life, working, raising children, being faithful.

Martyrs are Easter Christians more so than Christmas Christians. **Eastern Christians accept the pain with the joy. They know there is no resurrection without death.**

I'm grateful to the many Regnum Christi missionaries who took that message to the streets this week. From Manila to Monterrey, from New York to New Orleans, Regnum Christi missionaries take the message of Easter to the public square.

Of course, each of us can do that whenever we encounter another soul in need of mercy. Share the Easter joy!