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**The Pope's Easter Vigil Homily:**

**We Celebrate the First Day of the New Creation**

**By Pope Benedict XVI**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

**The liturgical celebration of the Easter Vigil makes use of two eloquent signs. First there is the fire that becomes light. As the procession makes its way through the church, shrouded in the darkness of the night, the light of the Paschal Candle becomes a wave of lights, and it speaks to us of Christ as the true morning star that never sets - the Risen Lord in whom light has conquered darkness.**

**POPE, ACCORDING TO THE 2ND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS, WHICH YOU PEOPLE SEEM SO ENAMORED WITH, IT IS DARKNESS THAT WILL HAVE THE FINAL VICTORY, NOT LIGHT.**

**The second sign is water. On the one hand, it recalls the waters of the Red Sea, decline and death, the mystery of the Cross.**

**POPE, "MYSTERY OF THE CROSS?"**

**YOU HAVE MASTERED THE ART OF UNDERSTATEMENT.**

**But now it is presented to us as spring water, a life-giving element amid the dryness. Thus it becomes the image of the sacrament of baptism, through which we become sharers in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet these great signs of creation, light and water, are not the only constituent elements of the liturgy of the Easter Vigil. Another essential feature is the ample encounter with the words of sacred Scripture that it provides. Before the liturgical reform there were twelve Old Testament readings and two from the New Testament.**

**POPE, WHY DID GOD'S WORD REQUIRE LITURGICAL REFORM?**

**The New Testament readings have been retained. The number of Old Testament readings has been fixed at seven, but depending upon the local situation, they may be reduced to three.**

**POPE, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR GOD CHANGES HIS MIND A LOT.**

**The Church wishes to offer us a panoramic view of whole trajectory of salvation history, starting with creation, passing through the election and the liberation of Israel to the testimony of the prophets by which this entire history is directed ever more clearly towards Jesus Christ. In the liturgical tradition all these readings were called prophecies. Even when they are not directly foretelling future events, they have a prophetic character, they show us the inner foundation and orientation of history. They cause creation and history to become transparent to what is essential. In this way they take us by the hand and lead us towards Christ, they show us the true Light.**

**UNFORTUNATELY POPE, THEY MISSED TWO-THIRDS OF THE POPULATION OF THE EARTH.**

**At the Easter Vigil, the journey along the paths of sacred Scripture begins with the account of creation. This is the liturgy's way of telling us that the creation story is itself a prophecy. It is not information about the external processes by which the cosmos and man himself came into being.**

**POPE, HOW COULD A DETAILED HISTORY OF THE CREATION OF THE COSMOS AND OF HUMANITY BE CONSIDERED PROPHECY? THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU MAY HAVE BEEN HITTING THE COMMUNION GRAPE JUICE A LITTLE TOO HARD BEFORE WRITING THIS.**

**The Fathers of the Church were well aware of this. They did not interpret the story as an account of the process of the origins of things, but rather as a pointer towards the essential, towards the true beginning and end of our being.**

**NOW I GET IT POPE. SINCE YOU REALIZE THAT GENESIS IS INDEFENSIBLE YOU HAVE ELECTED TO REDEFINE THE SCRIPTURES SO THAT YOU CAN CONTINUE TO SURVIVE AS AN INSTITUTION. I WILL ADMIT THAT YOUR POSITION IS FAR STRONGER THAN THE EVANGELICAL FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO LOOK RIDICULOUS WHEN THEY TRY TO DEFEND FAIRY TALES BY ATTACKING SCIENCE.**

**Now, one might ask: is it really important to speak also of creation during the Easter Vigil?**

**WHY NOT POPE? WHAT IS ONE MORE FAIRY TALE?**

**Could we not begin with the events in which God calls man, forms a people for himself and creates his history with men upon the earth? The answer has to be: no. To omit the creation would be to misunderstand the very history of God with men, to diminish it, to lose sight of its true order of greatness. The sweep of history established by God reaches back to the origins, back to creation.**

**Our profession of faith begins with the words: "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth". If we omit the beginning of the Credo, the whole history of salvation becomes too limited and too small. The Church is not some kind of association that concerns itself with man's religious needs but is limited to that objective. No, she brings man into contact with God and thus with the source of all things. Therefore we relate to God as Creator, and so we have a responsibility for creation. Our responsibility extends as far as creation because it comes from the Creator.**

**Only because God created everything can he give us life and direct our lives. Life in the Church's faith involves more than a set of feelings and sentiments and perhaps moral obligations. It embraces man in his entirety, from his origins to his eternal destiny.**

**POPE, ABOUT THAT ETERNAL DESTINY - THAT IS PREVENTED BY THE 2ND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS.**

**Only because creation belongs to God can we place ourselves completely in his hands. And only because he is the Creator can he give us life for ever. Joy over creation, thanksgiving for creation and responsibility for it all belong together.**

**The central message of the creation account can be defined more precisely still. In the opening words of his Gospel, Saint John sums up the essential meaning of that account in this single statement: "In the beginning was the Word". In effect, the creation account that we listened to earlier is characterized by the regularly recurring phrase: "And God said ...."**

**The world is a product of the Word, of the Logos, as Saint John expresses it, using a key term from the Greek language. "Logos" means "reason", "sense", "word". It is not reason pure and simple, but creative Reason, that speaks and communicates itself. It is Reason that both is and creates sense.**

**POPE, IT IS ALSO REASON THAT GAVE SOME HUMANS THE COURAGE AND ABILITY TO FINALLY FREE THEMSELVES FROM THE THREATS OF INVISIBLE GHOSTS.**

**The creation account tells us, then, that the world is a product of creative Reason. Hence it tells us that, far from there being an absence of reason and freedom at the origin of all things, the source of everything is creative Reason, love, and freedom. Here we are faced with the ultimate alternative that is at stake in the dispute between faith and unbelief: are irrationality, lack of freedom and pure chance the origin of everything, or are reason, freedom and love at the origin of being?**

**POPE, YOU HAD BETTER HOPE THAT REASON, FREEDOM, AND LOVE AREN'T AT THE ORIGIN OF BEING, BECAUSE IF THEY ARE, YOU GUYS ARE IN DEEP SHIT. THERE EXISTS NOTHING ON THIS EARTH THAT COMBATS RELIGION MORE THAN RATIONALITY, FREEDOM, AND LOVE.**

**Does the primacy belong to unreason or to reason?**

**IT BELONGS TO REASON POPE. THAT IS WHY RELIGION IS FALLING ALL OVER THE WORLD EXCEPT IN MUSLIM NATIONS WHERE THEY STILL RESORT TO THE OLD TRIED-AND-TRUE METHODS OF INTIMIDATION, THREATS, VIOLENCE, AND MURDER TO CONTROL THE MASSES.**

**This is what everything hinges upon in the final analysis.**

**POPE, THEN YOU HAD BETTER ENROLL IN SOME ONLINE COURSES THAT CAN HELP YOU CHANGE PROFESSIONS.**

**As believers we answer, with the creation account and with John, that in the beginning is reason.**

**POPE, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE PLANTS BEFORE HE CREATED THE SUN. MY QUESTION IS - WHAT KIND OF REASONING ARE YOU EMPLOYING TO ACCEPT THAT ABSURD CLAIM?**

**In the beginning is freedom.**

**POPE, AND THEN RELIGION APPEARED, AND FREEDOM ... DISAPPEARED.**

**Hence it is good to be a human person. It is not the case that in the expanding universe, at a late stage, in some tiny corner of the cosmos, there evolved randomly some species of living being capable of reasoning and of trying to find rationality within creation, or to bring rationality into it.**

**OKAY POPE, WHY IS IT NOT THE CASE?**

**If man were merely a random product of evolution in some place on the margins of the universe, then his life would make no sense or might even be a chance of nature.**

**POPE, IT ONLY HAS TO MAKE SENSE TO US - NOT TO SOME INVISIBLE GHOST.**

**But no, Reason is there at the beginning: creative, divine Reason.**

**POPE, AND YOUR EVIDENCE FOR THAT CLAIM IS?**

**I ASK BECAUSE, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH EVIDENCE WE HAVE THAT YOU ARE WRONG.**

**And because it is Reason, it also created freedom;**

**POPE, IF IT CREATED FREEDOM WHY DIDN'T IT CONSIDER GRANTING SOME OF THAT FREEDOM ... TO SLAVES? WHY DID IT TAKE THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE HUMANS, THEMSELVES, HAD TO FREE THEM?**

**and because freedom can be abused, there also exist forces harmful to creation.**

**POPE, HOW DO YOU CONNECT THE ABUSE OF FREEDOM WITH THE EXISTENCE OF FORCES HARMFUL TO CREATION? THOSE ARE 2 SEPARATE IDEAS.**

**Hence a thick black line, so to speak, has been drawn across the structure of the universe and across the nature of man. But despite this contradiction, creation itself remains good, life remains good, because at the beginning is good Reason, God's creative love.**

**POPE, ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE TAKEN A GOOD LOOK AROUND THE PLANET LATELY? BECAUSE WE CAN'T BE LOOKIN' AT THE SAME PLACE.**

**Hence the world can be saved.**

**POPE, IF THE WORLD IS SO GOOD, WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE SAVED?**

**Hence we can and must place ourselves on the side of reason, freedom and love**

**POPE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT ATHEISTS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU.**

**on the side of God who loves us so much that he suffered for us,**

**WELL POPE, MILLIONS OF HUMANS HAVE SUFFERED BECAUSE OF HIM, SO WHY DON'T WE JUST CALL IT EVEN?**

**that from his death there might emerge a new, definitive and healed life.**

**POPE, HE DIDN'T DIE - HE WAS UP AND AROUND AGAIN IN 3 DAYS. WE HAVE HUMANS WHO LIE IN VEGETATIVE STATES FAR LONGER THAN THAT.**

**BESIDES, IF HE IS ALL-KNOWING AS YOU CLAIM, THEN HE KNEW HE WOULD BE MOVIN' AROUND AGAIN IN NO TIME; AND IF HIS FUTUREVISION FAILED HIM AND HE DIDN'T RESURRECT, THERE ARE STILL THOSE 2 OTHER GHOSTS TO KEEP THE FAITH GOIN' AND THE MONEY ROLLIN' IN.**

**The Old Testament account of creation that we listened to clearly indicates this order of realities.**

**POPE, WHICH OLD TESTAMENT DID YOU READ? I DON'T RECALL THERE BEING ANY INDICATION OF REALITY.**

**But it leads us a further step forward. It has structured the process of creation within the framework of a week leading up to the Sabbath, in which it finds its completion. For Israel, the Sabbath was the day on which all could participate in God's rest, in which man and animal, master and slave, great and small were united in God's freedom.**

**WAIT! HOLD IT A SECOND POPE. I ALMOST CHOKED ON THAT ONE. DID YOU REALLY JUST SAY THAT MASTERS AND SLAVES COULD UNITE IN GOD'S FREEDOM?**

**YES, I JUST REREAD YOUR LAST SENTENCE AND THAT *IS* EXACTLY WHAT YOU SAID.**

**Thus the Sabbath was an expression of the Covenant between God and man and creation. In this way, communion between God and man does not appear as something extra, something added later to a world already fully created. The Covenant, communion between God and man, is inbuilt at the deepest level of creation.**

**POPE, WHY DID GOD WAIT BILLIONS OF YEARS AFTER CREATION BEFORE MAKING THE COVENANT AND COMMUNION?**

**Yes, the Covenant is the inner ground of creation, just as creation is the external presupposition of the Covenant. God made the world so that there could be a space where he might communicate his love, and from which the response of love might come back to him.**

**POPE, IF YOU READ THE OLD TESTAMENT A LITTLE CLOSER YOU MIGHT FIND THAT GOD COMMUNICATED MORE THAN HIS LOVE TO THE AMORITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, CANAANITES, HIVITES, JEBUSITES, BASHANIANS, HESHBONIANS, SAMARIANS, AND EGYPTIANS.**

**From God's perspective, the heart of the man who responds to him is greater and more important than the whole immense material cosmos, for all that the latter allows us to glimpse something of God's grandeur.**

**POPE, THEN WHY WON'T HE HELP THEM? WHY DOES HE LET THEM STARVE TO DEATH? WHY DOES HE ALLOW THEM TO BECOME HORRIBLY DISFIGURED AND MAIMED? WHY DOES HE GIVE THEM CANCER?**

**IF HE TREATS THE CHRISTIANS, WHO LOVE HIM WITH COMPLETE DEVOTION THIS WAY, IT CASTS SOME DOUBT ON YOUR CLAIM THAT THEY ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN THE COSMOS.**

**Easter and the paschal experience of Christians, however, now require us to take a further step. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. After six days in which man in some sense participates in God's work of creation, the Sabbath is the day of rest. But something quite unprecedented happened in the nascent Church: the place of the Sabbath, the seventh day, was taken by the first day. As the day of the liturgical assembly, it is the day for encounter with God through Jesus Christ who as the Risen Lord encountered his followers on the first day, Sunday, after they had found the tomb empty.**

**The structure of the week is overturned. No longer does it point towards the seventh day, as the time to participate in God's rest. It sets out from the first day as the day of encounter with the Risen Lord.**

**POPE, SO WHAT HAPPENS TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO WERE STONED TO DEATH FOR WORKING ON THE SABBATH? AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T STONED, BUT SHOULD HAVE BEEN, FOR WORKING ON THE SABBATH?**

**This encounter happens afresh at every celebration of the Eucharist, when the Lord enters anew into the midst of his disciples and gives himself to them, allows himself, so to speak, to be touched by them, sits down at table with them.**

**This change is utterly extraordinary, considering that the Sabbath, the seventh day seen as the day of encounter with God, is so profoundly rooted in the Old Testament. If we also bear in mind how much the movement from work towards the rest-day corresponds to a natural rhythm, the dramatic nature of this change is even more striking.**

**This revolutionary development that occurred at the very beginning of the Church's history can be explained only by the fact that something utterly new happened that day. The first day of the week was the third day after Jesus' death. It was the day when he showed himself to his disciples as the Risen Lord. In truth, this encounter had something unsettling about it.**

**POPE, HERE'S WHAT I FIND UNSETTLING ABOUT IT: JESUS WAS SUPPOSEDLY CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY; IF HE AROSE ON THE FIRST DAY AFTER HIS DEATH, THAT WOULD BE SATURDAY, IF HE ROSE ON THE SECOND DAY AFTER, IT WOULD BE SUNDAY, BUT HE AROSE ON THE THIRD DAY AFTER, WHICH IS MONDAY. SO HOW IS IT THAT YOU PEOPLE CAN ADD 3 DAYS TO FRIDAY ... AND COME UP WITH SUNDAY?**

**The world had changed. This man who had died was now living with a life that was no longer threatened by any death. A new form of life had been inaugurated, a new dimension of creation.**

**POPE, HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT?**

**FIRST, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT LIVING A LIFE NO LONGER THREATENED BY DEATH WHEN HE HAD ALREADY DONE THAT FOR BILLIONS OF YEARS?**

**SECOND, IF HE WAS A NEW FORM OF LIFE - WHAT WAS HE BEFORE HE CAME DOWN TO EARTH? A DIFFERENT FORM OF LIFE?**

**The first day, according to the Genesis account, is the day on which creation begins. Now it was the day of creation in a new way, it had become the day of the new creation. We celebrate the first day. And in so doing we celebrate God the Creator and his creation. Yes, we believe in God, the Creator of heaven and earth. And we celebrate the God who was made man, who suffered, died, was buried and rose again. We celebrate the definitive victory of the Creator and of his creation. We celebrate this day as the origin and the goal of our existence.**

**POPE, I WOULDN'T BE SO QUICK TO CELEBRATE THE VICTORY OF HIS CREATION IF I WERE YOU. TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND AND YOU MIGHT SEE THAT HIS CREATION ISN'T GOING QUITE AS WELL AS HE HAD HOPED.**

**We celebrate it because now, thanks to the risen Lord, it is definitively established that reason is stronger than unreason, truth stronger than lies, love stronger than death.**

**POPE, YOU GOT THE FIRST 2 RIGHT WHICH IS WHY YOUR RELIGION IS ON THE ROPES. THE THIRD ONE "LOVE STRONGER THAN DEATH" DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.**

**We celebrate the first day because we know that the black line drawn across creation does not last for ever. We celebrate it because we know that those words from the end of the creation account have now been definitively fulfilled: "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31).**

**POPE, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME, RIGHT?**

**Amen.**

**THANKS FOR THE SERMON POPE. YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME FOR STIFFING THE COLLECTION BASKET, BUT WHILE THINGS MIGHT BE "VERY GOOD" FOR THE RICH, THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ALL THAT GREAT FOR THE REST OF US.**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**RESURRECTION: TWO DYING STARS TO BE REBORN AS ONE**

**WHITE DWARFS ARE DEAD STARS THAT PACK A SUN'S-WORTH OF MATTER INTO AN EARTH-SIZED BALL. ASTRONOMERS HAVE JUST DISCOVERED AN AMAZING PAIR OF WHITE DWARFS WHIRLING AROUND EACH OTHER ONCE EVERY 39 MINUTES. THIS IS THE SHORTEST-PERIOD PAIR OF WHITE DWARFS NOW KNOWN. MOREOVER, IN A FEW MILLION YEARS THEY WILL COLLIDE AND MERGE TO CREATE A SINGLE STAR. THESE STARS HAVE ALREADY LIVED A FULL LIFE. WHEN THEY MERGE, THEY'LL ESSENTIALLY BE 'REBORN' AND ENJOY A SECOND LIFE.**

**OUT OF THE 100 BILLION STARS IN THE MILKY WAY, ONLY A HANDFUL OF MERGING WHITE DWARF SYSTEMS ARE KNOWN TO EXIST. THE LATEST DISCOVERY WILL BE THE FIRST OF THE GROUP TO MERGE AND BE REBORN.**

**THE NEWLY IDENTIFIED BINARY STAR IS LOCATED ABOUT 7,800 LIGHT-YEARS AWAY IN THE CONSTELLATION CETUS. IT CONSISTS OF TWO WHITE DWARFS, A VISIBLE STAR AND AN UNSEEN COMPANION WHOSE PRESENCE IS BETRAYED BY THE VISIBLE STAR'S MOTION AROUND IT. THE VISIBLE WHITE DWARF WEIGHS ABOUT 17 PERCENT AS MUCH AS THE SUN, WHILE THE SECOND WHITE DWARF WEIGHS 43 PER CENT AS MUCH. ASTRONOMERS BELIEVE THAT BOTH ARE MADE OF HELIUM.**

**THE TWO WHITE DWARFS ORBIT EACH OTHER AT A DISTANCE OF 140,000 MILES -- LESS THAN THE DISTANCE FROM EARTH TO THE MOON. THEY WHIRL AROUND AT SPEEDS OF 1 MILLION MILES PER HOUR, COMPLETING ONE ORBIT IN ONLY 39 MINUTES. THE FATE OF THESE STARS IS ALREADY SEALED. BECAUSE THEY WHEEL AROUND SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, THE WHITE DWARFS STIR THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM, CREATING EXPANDING RIPPLES KNOWN AS GRAVITATIONAL WAVES. THOSE WAVES CARRY AWAY ORBITAL ENERGY, CAUSING THE STARS TO SPIRAL CLOSER AND CLOSER TOGETHER. IN ABOUT 37 MILLION YEARS, THEY WILL COLLIDE AND MERGE.**

**WHEN SOME WHITE DWARFS COLLIDE, THEY EXPLODE AS A SUPERNOVA. HOWEVER, TO EXPLODE THE TWO COMBINED HAVE TO WEIGH 40 PERCENT MORE THAN OUR SUN. THIS WHITE DWARF PAIR ISN'T HEAVY ENOUGH TO GO SUPERNOVA. INSTEAD, THEY WILL EXPERIENCE A SECOND LIFE. THE MERGED REMNANT WILL BEGIN FUSING HELIUM AND SHINE LIKE A NORMAL STAR ONCE MORE. WE WILL WITNESS STARLIGHT REBORN.**

**MY COMMENT:**

**UNLIKE RESURRECTION IN RELIGION, RESURRECTION IN SCIENCE IS REAL.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**AYN RAND (1905 –1982) 77 YEARS.**

**SINCE I HAVE QUOTED RAND PREVIOUSLY, I WILL GIVE ONLY A VERY BRIEF BIO. SHE WAS A RUSSIAN-AMERICAN NOVELIST, PHILOSOPHER, PLAYWRIGHT, AND SCREENWRITER. SHE IS KNOWN FOR HER TWO BEST-SELLING NOVELS THE FOUNTAINHEAD AND ATLAS SHRUGGED; AND FOR DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM SHE CALLED OBJECTIVISM.**

**"PITY FOR THE GUILTY IS TREASON TO THE INNOCENT."**