

**Pastoral Council**  
**Thoughts For Reflection**  
**April 3, 2016**

*What does it mean, “Jesus conquered the grave”?*

In the Gospels, Jesus is depicted, not so much as ethical teacher, but as cosmic warrior, come to do battle with the powers of sickness, disease, hatred, and sin. He shows his Lordship over fallen nature itself as he calms the storm and heals broken bodies.

Jesus calls out the powers and battles with them—not with the crude weapons of the world—but with God’s weapons of non-violence, compassion, and forgiveness.

The cosmos, which had been moving in one direction, now seems through him to be moving in another. The powers of dissolution, division, and separation are now being conquered. Jesus is knitting up the torn cosmos.

But what is the ultimate power of the world, the ultimate source of violence, sin, scattering, and dissolution? It is the power of death.

Because we are afraid to die, we cling to ourselves defensively; we try to assuage our fear through material things and sex and power; we lash out at others violently. Death tears at the fabric of the cosmos. One could say that the fear of death is at the root of all of the sin and violence in the human community.

Therefore, just as Jesus—God’s warrior—came to do battle with all of the powers opposed to God’s intention, just as he came to bring God’s “yes” to the “no” of the world, so he had to confront the final and greatest power.

Jesus stood, his whole life long, in the muddy waters of our human dysfunction, for he had to engage it at close quarters, drawing, as St. Anselm said, the diamond from the muck.

Jesus goes into the kingdom of death and brings to that dark place the light of God—and more to the point, he brings the power of God, and with this power he breaks the hold that death has over us.

Thus the Resurrection of Jesus is the declaration of victory over this terrible power. The dark cloud that has brooded over our lives, turning us in on ourselves and outward in violence, has been removed. The power that has held us ransom has been overthrown.

(Bishop Robert Barron)