

Going Through: An Easter Reflection

BY MSGR. VINCENT HAUT

Every Easter we use one word a lot. We reach back into Hebrew and sing “alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.” In English we could be saying “Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord,” but we prefer the older Jewish way of expressing our gratitude and joy at Christ’s rising from the dead. It is our most popular Easter word.

I like another word we should be thinking about at this time of year. It is not from an ancient language. It does not sound especially beautiful. But it works. The word I propose for this season is “through.” Some people prefer to spell it “thru,” but we can stick with the traditional spelling. Let’s think about how important this little word is for Easter Christians.

Jesus lived his life in a certain way. He was born poor. He grew up in a neglected part of Palestine. He taught crowds and performed miracles as an obedient servant of his Father. He lived all those experiences with attention and obedience. He did not try to skirt around poverty or rejection or resistance or pain. We can say that he went through his life.

He did not skip the line. He asked for no special treatment. He did what he had to do. He came for a purpose, and he lived his calling wholeheartedly and completely. He faced the challenges of his life and did not try to go around, behind, over or under them. He went through his life.

Jesus really died. He went through death. People have tried to downplay that fact. They were the first heretics. The Church has always insisted that Jesus truly died. He went through his death just as surely as he went through his life.

We, his disciples, need to remember this. We are tempted to think of the Resurrection of Jesus as something much less than what it really is. It is not a magic trick. It is not a “Get Out of Jail Free” card. It does not entitle us to an easy life or an easy victory. The Resurrection is for people who have gone through death. It is a promise to those who live their lives as Jesus did — that we enter eternal life through our life and death.

Mary can inspire us to follow her son’s example and her own.

Think of all she went through before her own death. She gave birth to him in a strange place. She taught him how to be a good Jew and a good person. She urged him to help at the wedding at Cana. She listened to his preaching and watched his miracles. She was with him during that last week of his life, even standing with him by the cross.

Mary had even more to go through after Christ’s death. She was there when Jesus breathed peace on his disciples. She felt the Spirit shaking things up on Pentecost. She lived out her last years with St. John. And then, finally, she passed through her own death.

Look at the lives of the saints. They are people who went through their lives wholeheartedly and obediently, like Jesus. They faced unique challenges with great courage.

They did not run away. They did not take the easy path. They show us how to live lives of integrity and purpose. They are examples for us today, inviting us to go through our lives with purpose, integrity and confidence in Jesus.

Living this way is never easy, but it is our vocation. Singing “alleluia” is good, but it is never enough. We need to praise the Lord, but we also have to go through our lives. The songs we sing should flow from the lives we live.

Our culture today gives the impression that an easier way can always be found. GPS alerts us to a quicker route. Theme parks have shorter lines — for a fee. Express lanes promise faster trips. These conveniences may save time, but they can create the illusion that there is always an easier, faster way.

That is a mistake. There is not always an easier way. We have to go through life and death.

The only way to move from life on earth into life in heaven is to go through death. This paradox is at the heart of Easter. We pass through death with Jesus only if we pass through life with him — and with Mary and all those holy people who have gone before us. We call it the Paschal Mystery.

Edgar Guest wrote a poem called *See It Through*, which reminds us that life is best faced steadfastly and with courage. But his poem does not make clear that we go through life with Christ, who went through life — and death — before us.

Have a long and happy Easter season. It ends on Pentecost. Sing alleluia by going through life with Christ. When the time for death comes, you will go through it with Christ into glory. ❤️

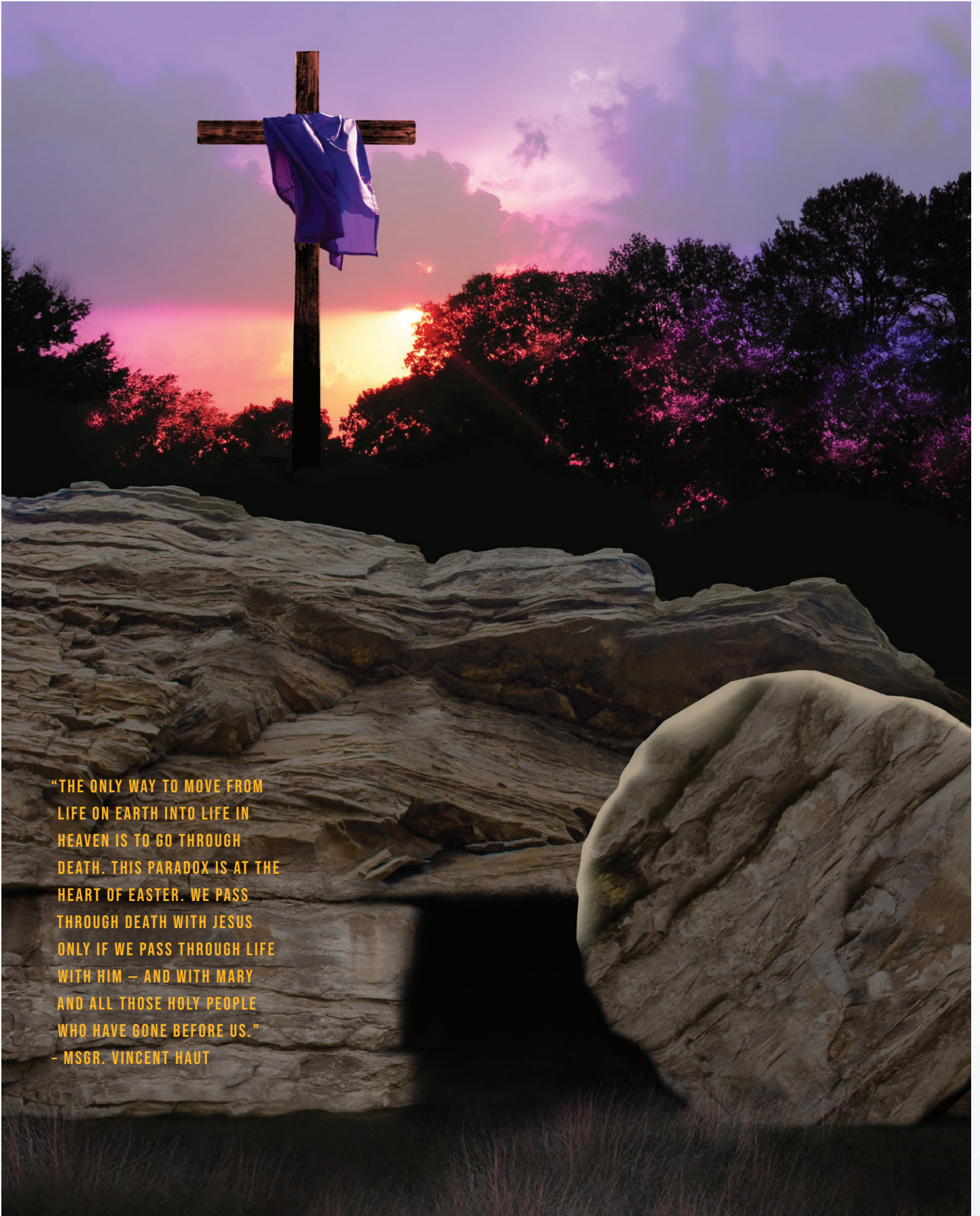
See It Through

BY EDGAR A. GUEST

*When you're up against a trouble,
Meet it squarely, face to face;
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,
Plant your feet and take a brace.
When it's vain to try to dodge it,
Do the best that you can do;
You may fail, but you may conquer,
See it through!
Black may be the clouds about you
And your future may seem grim,
But don't let your nerve desert you;
Keep yourself in fighting trim.
If the worst is bound to happen,
Spite of all that you can do,
Running from it will not save you,
See it through!
Even hope may seem but futile,
When with troubles you're beset,
But remember you are facing
Just what other men have met.
You may fail, but fall still fighting;
Don't give up, whate'er you do;
Eyes front, head high to the finish.
See it through!*

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