



## A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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### **Archbishop's Easter message: our invitation to the banquet**

Fans of the Ramblers from Loyola of Chicago hope that their team's basketball skills and the prayers of Sister Jean Dolores result in a NCAA championship.

That's an ordinary kind of hope, which is concerned with what's possible; for example, we hope that the Ramblers win, but it might not happen.

The great hope of Christians is different than an ordinary kind of hope. The followers of Jesus hope that they go to heaven when they die, which is a sure and certain hope; we call it the blessed assurance.

Our hope is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus, by which he conquered death and made the eternal life of heaven possible for us. In his preaching, Jesus told his followers that by his death and resurrection he was going on ahead to prepare a place for us.

St. Paul engaged in powerful witness to the resurrection of the followers of Jesus, saying that if we do not rise, then Christ did not rise, and if Christ did not rise, then our faith is in vain, and we are still in our sins.

It is not the sin of presumption to have this hope. How could anyone think that when the Church talks about Holy Communion as the pledge of eternal life? And in the prayers at Mass, right after receiving Holy Communion, we pray that it will be our healing for eternity.

This is the blessed assurance for those who say: I do believe in God's love for me, I can be forgiven by God for any and all of my sins, and I will try to amend my life, I will die trying.

We have here no lasting city; rather, we prepare to go to our true home of heaven, which we experience as perfect union with God, a union as close as rain and ocean, breath and air.

In that union with God we Rest In Peace because our longing is quieted as a result of having all that we desire is satisfied completely and forever. And that happens because what we truly desire when we yearn for anything... is God.

It's not uncommon to hear Catholics saying silly things like, "I'll be lucky if I make it to Purgatory!" That makes no more sense than someone who says, when invited to a banquet: "I'll be lucky just to get to the dry cleaners to pick up my party clothes."

We're invited to the banquet, not to the dry cleaners. We're invited by God to eternal life of heaven, not to Purgatory. Yes, we believe in Purgatory as the final purification from the stain of sin before heaven, but it is not a destination; heaven is our true home.

So, happy Easter! Because of what Jesus did on the first Easter, and what he promised his followers, and because you insist that you do believe in God's love, that you can be forgiven by God for any and all of your sins, and that you will try to amend your life, you then have the promise of the eternal life of heaven. Alleluia!