

# *Pastor's Message for March & April 2012*

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## *Spring: One More Time*

The world's calendar and the liturgical year trade memories and hopes, seldom more intensely than in the months of March and April.

We celebrate in this season Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 19) and Passover (April 6). The darkest time in Jewish life and one of the history's most evil events is remembered in the Holocaust. It is also the time for Passover. The most systematic and heartless destruction of life we have ever known, the unprovoked and merciless barbarism of the Holocaust, did not achieve its end or terminate Passover. In concentration camps and, today, in Jewish homes around the world, survival and promise are celebrated, the victory of light over darkness.

Our planet itself on Earth Day (April 22) becomes a stage in which the darkness and cold of winter yield to the emergence of Spring (March 20). Passover, Easter, Spring and Earth Day. We are reminded at every turn that evil cannot prevail and that hope is never finally disappointed. The shadow of the cross of Jesus and the darkness of the tomb are flooded with light on Easter morning.

The secular calendar, nature itself, the liturgical year converge on hope. We remember these days and events so that we never forget the most important of all lessons: we can be diminished but not destroyed. In the midst of the Holocaust, in the bondage of Egypt, in the depths of winter, at the cross or tomb, hope seemed fragile and foolish. We could not believe then that the mighty forces which were ranged against life would become helpless before the dawn of Spring in all its gentleness.

In March, we celebrate the Annunciation (March 25) when a young woman in a forgotten hamlet is told that nothing is impossible with God. And she believes it. On April 25, we commemorate Mark, a disciple of Jesus, who writes the first Gospel to show that love and compassion are the ultimate human values and that they are invincible

We, in our sometimes fragmented lives, settle at times for all that is less. We extinguish hope by our forgetfulness of its incessant victories. We put boundaries around hope as though this would stop it. We refuse to believe that armies of the night are always dispersed, that Berlin Walls are always taken down, that the broken body will be unattached from the cross and that death itself will yield to new life. We sometimes look so intently at winter that we fail to notice that Spring is generated through it and that the Earth is a planet of flowers which always make their way through broken ice and dislodge our fears that they would not return.

Hope is always endangered and never imperiled, constantly lost but forever rediscovered.

Anthony Padovano