



THE RT. REV. STEVEN ANDREW MILLER, D.D.

BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

Easter 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of my favorite Easter hymns is one that is not found in our hymnal but in the hymnal of the Church of my childhood. I must admit I am a bit puzzled by the fact that it is not in our hymnal as it is the official hymn of The World Student Christian Federation, a federation of autonomous national Student Christian Movements. Moreover, it has a distinctive Anglican pedigree as it is often used in services involving the British Royal Family. I imagine many of you are familiar with it but if not, here is the text.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.*

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

*Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting. Refrain*

*No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. Refrain*

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My favorite line in the hymn is the petition, "make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love" a reference to Romans 8:37. Paul writes, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

I have always been moved by the phrase “More than Conquerors.” What does it mean. Some years ago, I ran across a book by Francis Bland Tucker, a priest of this Church to whom our current hymnal is dedicated. He wrote that Jesus is more than a conqueror because his victory is not simply a victory of overcoming death but a victory through death. Jesus did not simply beat death or get around it. Jesus went through it. We confess that Jesus really died, he descended to the dead, and was raised on the third day. He endured death and experienced it. That is what makes the resurrection such Good News.

We gather this Easter to celebrate Jesus’ victory. We face death -- whether it is the death of our mortal life, the final death, or the death to those things that separate us from God – with confidence knowing that death is never the final word. We are more than conquerors.

May God bless you and yours this Easter.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "M".

The Rt. Steven A. Miller
Bishop of Milwaukee

SAM/bjk