

## **Easter Sunday: Resurrection of the Lord C/2010**

When someone visits the tombs of Pharaohs in Egypt, one of the striking things is an obsession for everlasting life. The hieroglyphics of “life everlasting” appear constantly on mural paintings and sarcophagi. These inscriptions, instead of being fortuitous, are an expression of a deep desire that is carved in each one of us, namely a yearning to live as long as possible, a longing to be in good health and an aspiration to enjoy life to the maximum of our strength.

However, in spite of our good will and our desire to live, we face on a daily basis the reality of death and non-fulfillment of our expectations. In face of such a reality, the feast of Easter reminds us that what we long for and we cannot obtain by our own strength is given to us by faith, in the death and resurrection of Jesus. That is why Easter is, above all, a feast of life, a life that is bigger than death, bigger than human expectations that are limited only to the life of this world.

The resurrection of Jesus is the founding feast of our faith and the beginning of our own promise for eternal life. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there would never have been faith in him. Perhaps, people would have talked about him as we do with historic figures who have dominated human history over the centuries. But all that would not have any impact on the world and on the billions of peoples who believe today in Jesus Christ.

It is because Jesus Christ is alive that we are gathered here in his name to praise God and thank him for the gift of life he has given us in raising him from the dead. All the readings of this day convey just one message: Jesus Christ is alive; he is not to be looked among the dead, but among the living.

That is what Peter tells the Jews in the Acts of the Apostles. He proclaims to them that Jesus they hung on a tree, God raised him on the third day and granted him to be visible. He attests that the apostles are the witnesses of what happened to him. They ate and drank with him; they listened to his teaching and had seen his miracles. As they were with him before his death, they were with him after his resurrection. They saw him dead, but they saw him also alive. He is alive forever.

It is that witness which they have transmitted to us so that we, too, may believe and come to eternal life. And the Gospel of this Easter Sunday describes what happened that “first day of the week” and how, when everything seemed to end in failure, God intervened in a miraculous way and raised Jesus from the dead.

Mary Magdalene, Peter and John who went to the tomb in the early morning, could not believe with their eyes. They are taken by surprise: the Lord is risen. The stone is removed from the tomb; the burial cloths trail on the ground and the tomb is empty. While Mary Magdalene thought, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb”, and Peter did not know what to do, John, who saw, quietly believed.

On Easter Sunday, there is nothing we need more than faith in order to penetrate God’s mystery. Only faith can help us understand that no grave has the power to prevent God’s life to spring out and reach us. On Easter morning only faith can make us understand that nothing in the world, even death itself, can prevent God to give life anew to those who love him. That is why the

resurrection of Christ challenges us to believe in Jesus with the whole of our heart even if we cannot touch him with our hands or see him with our eyes.

The part that love plays in the story of the resurrection is tremendous. It was Mary Magdalene who loved Jesus so much who was the first to go to the tomb. It was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved and who loved Jesus, who was the first to believe in the resurrection after having seen the linen on the ground.

This episode teaches a big lesson for our own life. Sympathy is the bond that unities people. Love is the great interpreter of life. Love can grasp the truth when the mind is uncertain. Love can realize the meaning of a thing when research is blind. It is only when we give our hearts and minds to Jesus that we can understand him and help others understand him. That is why at Easter, Jesus begs our love, because if we have it, we can understand the mystery of his death and resurrection, and come to our eternal salvation.

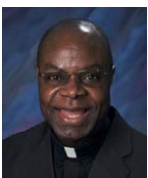
The implication of all this is simple. We cannot approach the risen Christ with old habits and old manners. We have to change our ways of being, thinking and acting. As St Paul suggests, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

In Jewish literature, leaven stands for evil influence. Leaven was dough which had been kept over from a previous baking and which, in the keeping, had fermented and had become corrupted. The resurrection of Jesus requires from us a complete transformation and conversion of heart. We have to leave behind us everything of all that contradicts the light of the risen Christ. We have to live in the light of Jesus and not in darkness.

Because Jesus became a man for our sake and he died for our sake; in his resurrection, we raise with him. That is why, Christ's resurrection means that our own physical death is not an obstacle to the flourishing of God's life in us. Like Christ, when we die God gives us life anew. Christ himself makes us participate in his own resurrection. His resurrection is our resurrection. That is the good news of Easter, namely that no matter how badly we have it now, we will be raised up with Jesus.

It does not mean that we cannot suffer anymore; it does not mean that all our problems go away. What it means is that in all that we are not alone; Jesus is with us. If we persevere and support everything with him, we will triumph like him and share in his resurrection. This is why Easter pushes us to raise our eyes beyond the present human condition and hope for God's redemption. Easter affirms that we will never be abandoned, that nothing is ever hopeless. May God help you to make Easter the feat of your Redemption. God bless you all. Happy Easter to all!

**Acts 10, 34a, 37-43; 1 Corinthians 5, 6b-8; John 20, 1-9**



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