

Easter Sunday: Resurrection of the Lord A/2020

I want to start this homily with the Psalm 118: 22-24, that says: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad".

Why shall we rejoice? Why shall we be glad? To these questions, there is only one answer: God has done something extraordinary by raising Jesus from dead. He has given us hope and assurance that, whatever might happen to us and how bad we might have it with human suffering, our destiny is tied up to that of Jesus Christ. Our life will never simply end up in the grave forever, but rather it will continue beyond our physical death in order to find its rest in the heavenly kingdom.

Jesus is the first that God has raised from the dead. He is alive and not dead. That is what motivated the disciples to stand up and defy the Jewish authorities in speaking in the name of Jesus before the crowd of the Jews.

And yet, we know that when Jesus was arrested, the disciples ran away; they went on hiding. Suddenly they came out and started talking without fear. This change of attitude is consecutive to the great event of the resurrection of Jesus.

God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him the power to appear to his disciples. The Risen Christ in turn gave courage to the disciples to talk about him and to be his witnesses. The disciples are, then, witnesses not only of the things that happened before Jesus' death, but also of his resurrection from death.

The consequence of the resurrection of Jesus is that although we are living here on earth, our gaze has to be fixed on heaven, our eternal homeland, where Christ is in the glory of the Father. As St Paul says, we have to seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. From now on, our lives are hidden with Christ in God. Because our discipleship makes us one with Jesus, when Christ will appear at the end of time, we will appear with him in glory.

The Gospel of this Easter Sunday describes what happened that day. In fact, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb that Sabbath, they were taken by surprise: "the stone was removed from the tomb". The angel reassured them: the crucified you are looking for has been raised just as he said. When Jesus appeared to them later on, it was in order to confirm what they already knew: He is Risen.

From that moment, the disciples understood that the death of Jesus was not a defeat, but rather a victory of life over the negative forces of evil. On that day of the resurrection, everything became clear to the disciples who understood that the passion and the death of Jesus were part of God's plan to give life to the world.

Of course, there was the sorrow of Good Friday with its tears and sadness, but that was just a part of the story. The whole story was the Resurrection. Did not Jesus himself say that whoever believes in him will not die and even if he dies, he will live? Could he really fail to apply that same teaching to his own life? Not at all.

That is why the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our faith. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there would not have been faith in him. Perhaps, people would have

been talking about him as we do with some important figures in human history. But that would have been just that.

The resurrection requires that we have faith in God. Only faith can help us understand that there is nothing impossible to God. Because nothing is impossible to him, he can raise someone from ashes and cover him with glory. Faith I am talking about is not knowledge of the things about God, but rather trust in God and his word. In fact, faith in the resurrection implies trust, confidence and hope that even in the worst of a dark night, a dawn is possible.

As Jesus became a man for our sake, so is his resurrection for our sake. He is risen so that we share in his resurrection. His resurrection is our resurrection; he makes us participate in the glory of his resurrection. His resurrection sheds light on the outcome of our life. His resurrection tells that we do not die in order to remain in the grave forever, but rather in order to rise and share in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

That is the good news of Easter that makes us all glad. It teaches us that, no matter what we endure in this life, God will never abandon us. He will intervene in our favor because of his faithfulness. At that time, we will understand that we would not have run in vain. We would not have accepted so much sacrifice for the sake of our faith in vain. We would not have lived our Christian commitments with so much courage, determination and abnegation for nothing.

That is why, although we are surrounded with problems and sickness, although the coronavirus is beating us everywhere, we are not discouraged. We are strong and want to fight until the end. The risen Christ himself challenges us to trust him in every happening of our life and to hope for our redemption. The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that there is never a Good Friday without Easter. Easter attests to the truth that we will never be abandoned, that nothing is ever hopeless. Happy Easter to all!

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43; Colossians 3: 1-4; Matthew 28: 1-10



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