

The Resurrection of the Lord B2021

When Mary Magdalene and the other women, followers of Jesus, went to the tomb that very early morning, they had no idea of what was waiting for them there. As friends of Jesus, their hearts were full of sadness and grief because of the death of their master. They wanted just to show their love by embalming the body with spices and oil, according to the Jewish custom. Only one preoccupation was in their mind: "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

By seeing the tomb wide open and the stone removed from the entrance, they were certainly taken by surprise, but they understood that something has happened: Jesus was not there. What was a simple apprehension became certitude when the angel told them: "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here."

Since that day, the news has travelled throughout the whole world. That news, spread by the eyes witnesses of that great event, has come to us. That news conveys just one and simple message: Jesus Christ is alive; he is not in the tomb. The grave was not strong enough to keep him imprisoned in its abyss. That news of the resurrection of Jesus is what we proclaim today. As people of faith, we proclaim that Jesus Christ is alive; God has raised him from the dead; he lives forever. He is victorious over human demise and death. God has given him life back.

That is what St Peter summarizes in his speech before the Jewish people, as we heard from the Acts of the Apostles. He reminds them of the beginning of Jesus in Galilee after the baptism from John, how he went all over the country preaching and healing the sick through the power of the Holy Spirit. He was unjustly put to death. But, God has raised him to life again. In him all the prophecies have been fulfilled. In his name all the people have their sins forgiven.

The apostles are witnesses of all that happened to Jesus from the beginning. They shared in his life. They saw his passion and death, but they also saw him risen from the dead. Because of their intimate relationship with Jesus, God has allowed that Jesus be visible to them so that they bear that witness to us, too. It is that witness of the risen Christ that the Gospel brings to us on this day of the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus.

What we celebrate at Easter Sunday is the gift of life, because God is life. Those who killed Jesus were wrong. God has given life back to Jesus. Those who hope in him will see with their own eyes the new life God has prepared for us with him. Those who trust in him will enjoy the gift of an everlasting happiness and joy because they will live with him forever. As St Paul says in the second reading, "Our Paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed", but he is alive. Let us celebrate the feast in sincerity and truth.

Luke says that at the death of Jesus, darkness came all over the whole land until three in the afternoon and the curtain of the temple was torn in two (Luke 23: 24). At the resurrection of Jesus, light came back and what was torn was whole again. Easter reminds us that the darkness of evil and hatred will never have the last say.

The resurrection of Jesus proclaims the ultimate triumph of light over darkness and goodness over evil, both in us and in our world. Today is the dawn of a new day and a new light.

So we celebrate Jesus' resurrection today by rising from darkness and death ourselves. The Risen Lord himself, represented here by this beautiful Easter candle burning in our midst, is asking us to leave behind the works of darkness, to renounce and reject anything and everything in our lives which is dark, sinister and evil, dark thoughts and secrets, and to 'walk sternly as children of the light', following in his footsteps.

The resurrection of Jesus sheds light on human tragedy and the ups and downs of our lives. It tells that we are prepared for glory if we remain faithful to Jesus until the end. With the resurrection of Jesus the end of our journey becomes clear: beyond the tunnel of the present state of our world and our lives, there is a light.

The resurrection of Jesus compels us to have another look on the reality of death. For sure, we cannot deny the sadness of the death of our beloved ones, the anxiety it causes us and the void it leaves around us. However, whatever might be its burden on us and the sorrow it brings, death is not an absolute reality, because we die with the hope of something bigger than it. That is why in the credo we speak of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting as realities we are waiting for.

The resurrection of Jesus is the guaranty of our own resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus comforts us in our own suffering because if we suffer with him, with him we shall live; if we persevere in him, with him we shall reign. The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that there is no Good Friday without Easter. The resurrection is the means that God keeps in store for us who when we obey him until the end of journey. He wants us to live and share in the resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our faith. If Jesus did rise from the dead, there would not be faith in him. Perhaps, we would admire him as someone extraordinary who did great miracles in his life, but that would be just a chapter in the books of history. We are here tonight because Jesus alive. As Jesus became man for our sake, so he is risen for our sake so that we share in his resurrection. May Jesus bless all of you who join us today for the celebration of light! May he bless all your beloved ones and families, and bring you peace! Happy Ester to all!

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43; 1 Corinthians 5: 6b-8; Mark 16: 1-7



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