

## Easter Vigil – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022

How did I know Jesus? The answer to this question isn't through at first literature or philosophy; it happened through the life of the Church. Even as a little child I sensed a resurrectional power and grace, a mystical presence of God in the "Easter event".

To try to describe the power of the resurrection in words is always inadequate; to justify or explain why Jesus Christ, is fully God and fully man, leaves us falling short, clutching at words in disbelief, like Mary Magdalene or Simon Peter at the empty tomb; disbelief and amazement are words used to describe their witnessing to the empty tomb. I hope you realise like me that Jesus and the Church are, for me, impossible to separate as they are impossible to identify one with the other. The thing is, that Jesus is always infinitely beyond the institutional Catholic Church, and yet the Church cannot exist without him on earth. – 'The Church is the Bride of Christ'

On this Easter night, this holy night of all nights, we mark the moment when the historical event took place of Jesus rising from the dead. The reality of this event initially brought disbelief, confusion and amazement – As time went on the power of Christ's resurrection became one of optimism and liberation. The apostles and disciples realised, on reflection, that this was fulfilment of the prophecy and knew that the relationship between them and Jesus had changed dramatically. It was never going to be the same again. I think we can safely say that if this historical event, the resurrection of Jesus Christ had not actually taken place 2,000 years ago, then undoubtedly the early Christian Community would have died out years ago.

The Church, the Communion of Saints, the strength of Doctrine and the remarkable things that have been achieved over the centuries by men and women of faith, point to an eternal covenant between God and humanity, sealed by Jesus', Passion, death and resurrection.

Thus, the Church, does for us what Jesus did for his apostles, firstly it gives us the message of Holy Scripture. What matter is our desire and intention to live out the Spirit of the Gospel and hail the fulfilment of prophecy.

Also, that the resurrection of Jesus brings the Eucharist into the fullness of reality. Yes, we can come close to Jesus in our spiritual conversations and meditations, just as we can experience him in the gathering of the faithful, but he makes himself know in a special way at the breaking of the bread; that

when we share in Holy Communion, we share sacramentally in the one who rose from the dead. 'The Bread of Life'.

Every Sunday we celebrate Resurrection when we share in the Holy Eucharist. In the past 2 years the world has become more aware of the fragility of life and our vulnerability to infection as well as the dramatic consequences of conflict including the shortage of food and energy; the displacement of peoples and the escalation of war.

Humanity feverishly goes about its life like ants do in an enormous anthill, not aware that everything can suddenly be wiped out by the sudden attack of an aggressor.

Jesus the Son of God, by his death and resurrection calls on us to read the signs of the times and keep our faith in God alive.

As he said to the women of Jerusalem, on the way of the Cross, 'don't weep for me' – (I go to the Father), weep for your children, as he prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem 40 years later by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Jesus teaches us by his passion, death and resurrection to care for our soul by coming to Mass. And know this, most crucially, that, by our faith and love, he will never abandon us, that this world may kill the body but it can never destroy the soul. As he teaches us so beautifully, 'I am with you always, yes, until the end of time'.

God Bless you ALL,

ALLELUIA!

Canon Jeremy Bath