

Easter 2020

Please close your eyes, and imagine you are in total darkness, in a tomb with a dead body in it, wrapped up in bandages.

Darkness, silence...

Suddenly tiny flickers of light start to emerge from the dead body.

The flickering light starts to spread all over the body, into every part, it gets stronger and stronger and stronger, and now starts to fill the dark empty tomb, now it fills the tomb and almost burns the walls, it cannot be contained anymore, cracking noise, the stone starts moving from the entrance of the tomb and the light jumps out of the tomb, it shoots out into the area, and the source of life emerges from the tomb, glowing in the shape of a man, it is the Lord Jesus, opening His eyes, looking up into the sky and a big smile on his face.

He says: 'Here I am! I have conquered death!' He looks at the world and continues. 'This is my gift to you, my beloved, a joy-filled life without death, come to me and receive it back.'

'Receive it back!' Yes, when God created Adam and Eve He created them in His image: He created them to be loving, innocent and immortal beings, because God wanted to share His life with them eternally, not just for 80 or 100, or 500 years, but for ever. Today we celebrate that Jesus has won back for us the gift of eternal life.

Jesus won for us not only a spiritually happy eternal life, but a spiritual-physical eternal life, just as what Adam and Eve enjoyed in the beginning. St. Peter in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter tells us that there will be a new heaven and a new earth (cf. 2 Peter 3:13), and St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Philippians (3:21, NIV) that 'He [Jesus] will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like His own.' Without a body we would not be complete as human beings, because 'human' means to be from humus, from the earth, from soil. Without a body we wouldn't be able to live and interact with the physical realities of the new earth, in which we will leave when Jesus comes back. We profess in the Apostles' Creed the 'we look forward to the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.'

If Jesus was ready to die for our physical resurrection and we know from today's readings and from the readings of the next few weeks that the body is resurrected, then this means that the salvation of both our souls and bodies must be precious in the eyes of our heavenly Father.

St. Paul tells us in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Corinthians (5:17, NIV) that '...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.' So you don't even have to wait until the end of human history; the new life Jesus has won is already offered you. 'Come to me and receive

it back.' Your eternal life has already started when you were baptised, which means you have already died with Christ to your old bad habits and you are striving to be constantly renewed in your thought patterns and in your conduct in accord with the Spirit of Christ. St. Paul writes to the Romans (12:2, NIV): 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.'

So what is going to be our new nature like?

The empty tomb tells us that Christ's resurrected body is from the same body as the one which was crucified, because His body bears the marks of the crucifixion and He also looks exactly the same as the Jesus who was crucified, otherwise Mary of Magdala and the disciples would not have recognised Him after His resurrection. We also know from the readings that the resurrected body is not subject to the laws of physics, though it will function according to the laws of physics. We know this from those readings that tell us about Jesus' physical appearances to the fearful disciples in an unusual way, namely in a locked up room where they gathered for fear of the Jewish authorities. This suggests that the resurrected body is subject to the laws of the spirit, though it continues to function according to the laws of physics. St. Paul refers to this when He tells the Philippians (3:21) that 'He [Jesus] will take our weak bodies and change them into glorious bodies like His.'

So we have an exciting transformation to look for, a huge gift to receive from Jesus, and this gift will be ours not only for a few years, but for all eternity, and what will crown this gift is that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit will fill our new nature eternally with His eternal love, Alleluia, Alleluia!