

St. Dominic's Chapel

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“East-er, the Sun is Risen from the East: the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ”

“And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulcher, the sun being now risen...” (Saint Mark 16).

The Triumph and exultation of the Eastertide in the Catholic Church is because Jesus Christ is risen, and MANY of her children are redeemed. *“God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ – He has raised us up together with Christ and has made us sit together in the heavenly places” (St. Paul).*

Jesus confounded all His enemies by clothing in glory and splendor that Body, which had been the Victim of the cruelty of man. Christ’s triumph over death is the most conclusive proof of His Divinity and the foundation of our Faith.

Indeed, Christ’s Resurrection was necessary for the instruction of our Faith, which is in regards to the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ united with the sacred humanity of His body. It is not enough to believe the one without the other – Jesus Christ is true God and true man.

In order that our Faith in the truth of His Divinity might be confirmed, Jesus Christ rose again at the third day; He could wait to the end of the world. Yet He did not want to wait. Thus, it was needful that there should be some time between His death and rising. If He had risen immediately after death, it might seem that His death was not evident. And then some people would say, “His Resurrection was not true;” “it was symbolic or a mass-effect delusion.”

To establish the truth of Christ’s death, it was enough for His rising again to be deferred until the third day, for within that time some signs of life always appear in one who appears to be dead whereas he is alive. As a matter of fact, Thomas de Kempis – writer of the *Imitation of Christ* book – was buried alive; his body was put out from the sepulcher some time later, they founded with his right hand into his mouth....

In addition, Saint Augustine relates the third day after our Lord’s death to a mystical aspect, when writing about the Blessed Trinity: by His rising on the third day, the perfection of the number “three” is commended, which is the number of everything, as having beginning, middle and end. It is in the mystical sense that we are taught that Jesus Christ by His one death (in His Body) conquering death itself, destroyed our two deaths – the one of the body by the resurrection of the bodies at the end of the world, and of the soul by the grace we receive after Confession, when in mortal sin. The two deaths are as darkness on account of sin. Therefore – he said – Jesus Christ remained in death for one day and two nights.

Our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected early when the day was beginning to dawn, to denote that by His Resurrection He brought us to the light of glory. Just as He died when the day was drawing to its close, and nearing to darkness, in order to signify that by His death He would destroy the darkness of sin and its punishment.

Nevertheless, He is said to have risen on the third day, taking day as a natural day, which contains twenty-four hours. Saint Augustine says *“the night until the dawn, when the Lord’s Resurrection was proclaimed, belongs to the third day. Because God, who made the light to shine forth from darkness, in order that by the grace of the New Testament and partaking of Christ’s rising, we might hear this – ‘Once ye were darkness, but now light in the Lord.’ He insinuates in a measure to us that the day draws its origin from night: for, as the first days are computed from light to darkness on account of man’s down fall, so these days are reckoned from darkness to light giving to man’s restoration.”*

Even if He had risen at midnight, He could be said to have risen on the third day, taking it as a natural day. Mistakenly, some people argue in the sense of “three days after.” In fact, Christ rose again early, it can be affirmed that He rose on the third day, even taking “artificial” day, which is caused by the sun’s presence, because the sun had already begun to brighten the sky. It is in this sense that we speak about East-er, because always the beginning of the day is from the East, meaning Orient (which means origin or Genesis), as it will be in the life to come.

Hence, as is said in today’s Gospel *“the women come to the sepulcher, the sun being risen,”* which is not contrary to Saint John’s statement, *when it was yet dark.* Saint Augustine continuing says, it is because as the

day advances, the more the light arises, the more are the remaining shadows dispelled. But when Mark says “*then sun being now risen*” it is not to be taken as if the sun were already apparent over the horizon, but as coming presently into that place and time.

Let us remember that Christ’s death ought not to come from weakness of nature, lest it might not be believed to be voluntarily. Our Lord willed to die not from sickness but from suffering inflicted on Him, to which He gave Himself up willingly. That’s why we cannot say that our Lord’s body after death was a corpse. Christ did not wish His body to putrefy in any way or dissolve no matter how. It is for the manifestation of His Divine power that He willed that His body should continue incorrupt. Therefore, during the 36 hours that His body was in the sepulcher there was not corruption at all, and His sacred human nature still kept united with the Divinity.

Hence, Saint John Chrysostom says that with other men, especially with such as have wrought strenuously, their deeds shine forth in their lifetime, but as soon as they die, their deeds go with them. However, it is quite the contrary with our Lord Jesus Christ, because previous to the cross all is sadness and weakness, but as soon as He is crucified, everything comes to light, in order that we may learn it was not an ordinary man that was crucified.

The Resurrection is then a restoring from death to life. Christ has risen first to let us know how it will be for us, too. In one hand, our actual death is when a human soul separates from the body, even though corruption comes afterwards in one’s body, a man begins in any way to live anew after dead. On the other hand, a man is not only rescued from death but from the necessity of it, but also from the possibility of dying again. This was the instance of Lazarus, after our Lord rose him again from the dead, he had to die a second time.

However, restoring from death to life, we speak about perfect resurrection because so long as a man lives, subject to the necessity of dying, death has dominion over him. Aren’t we scared of dying? But when the moment of death is at hand, and one is dying with the Last Rites, with a good conscience and in knowledge of receiving forgiveness for the sins of all his life... Then we can speak of going to heaven. Surely, it is about a perfect resurrection in the life hereafter.

Consequently, speaking of perfect resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ is the first of them who is risen because by rising He is the first to attain life utterly immortal, as Saint Paul – *Christ rising from the dead dies now no more (Rom. 6, 9)*.

Therefore Christ manifested His Resurrection both by testimony and by proof or sign to us. As matter of fact, the angels gave testimony of His Resurrection, who announced the Resurrection to the women, as it is written in the Gospel. Also, it is the testimony He set before the apostles to show them the truth of the Resurrection.

Indeed, it was a true Resurrection: His Body was a true and solid body, not a phantom or a delusive image, like the air. He manifested it when he offered to touch him to Saint Thomas. Further, He showed his Body to behold and His features. And He showed that it was identically the same Body, which He had before, by showing them the scars of the wounds. Why?

He did it, in order that nothing might be wanted to make the manifestation complete, and then He showed the Divine Nature by working the miracle of the draught of fishes, and ascending into heaven while they were beholding Him.

Finally, our Lord Jesus Christ meant to show them the glory of His majesty by the brightness of His glorified Body. In the human soul such brightness will be in proportion to the degree of Charity reached, as long as we are on earth. The more Charity, the more light of glory – “*lumen gloriae*.”

So, the meaning of the Resurrection of our bodies in a glorify manner is for us the need of correction of our crooked way of life. Let us continue to keep the grace of God as long as we can. Let’s come back again and again to receive the grace of God in the Confessional, and to increase the sanctifying grace by the frequent reception of the Divine Eucharist. Our sacrifices and sufferings of this life with their most painful grieves have not resemblance with the peace and light of the life to come with the Glorified and Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Let us think during the Eastertide about heaven, how heaven is like for you?

Viva Cristo Rey!

Father Zendejas