



HOMILY FOR EASTER SUNDAY, YEAR A.

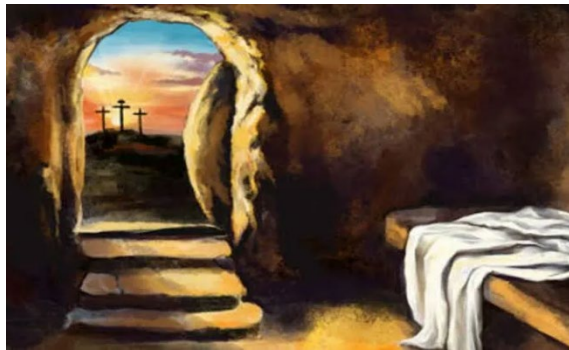
ACTS 10:34a, 37-43, PSALM 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23,
COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, JOHN 20:1-9.



CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY: ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA!

Today we celebrate Easter, the most important feast of our faith. We rejoice in a God who faces death frankly and who outstares it with the power of His own love. Resurrection is God's protest against the finality of death; it is love outstares violence; it is laughter in the tomb; it is a surprise of life overcoming the inevitability of death. Resurrection is God having the last laugh.

Today we exult in a God who refuses to leave the dead forever dead. Jesus did suffer a violent death; He was buried. But the Father has no intention of letting Jesus rest in peace? He gives death no permission to hold Jesus as the permanent victim of other people's



violence. The resurrection is God's answer to those who think that prophets are expendable and that death will render them harmless. The Father's undying affection for Jesus sweeps death aside as He claims His beloved Son again. Nothing can come between them. So, it shall be for us if we hold onto Jesus to the end; nothing can come between us and Jesus, not even death.

Beloved friends in Christ, when we celebrate Easter, we hold holy the memory of God's great act in raising Jesus from the dead. We believe that God's graciousness will be extended to ourselves and that our own death will not be the final word. Our faith educates our hope that we will participate in Jesus' resurrection on the last day. But a question arises: is our faith in the resurrection limited to remembering Jesus' resurrection and hoping for our own on the last day? What happens between times? What about today?

When we look at our world today, we must close our eyes and ears not to see and hear how suffering and violence continue to disfigure so many people. There are people here today who can feel their wounds. What does the resurrection of Jesus say to all this? Today. The challenge of Easter today is to understand the history of human suffering in the light of Jesus' resurrection. This means that we must take God's part in protesting against the violence and the suffering that are accepted so readily as inevitable. As Christians, we must make our protest against death in the midst of life. Death is not just a fate that we meet at

the end of life. We see death all around us in the midst of life. In evil powers, we see death, in the person we allow to starve, in those we oppress, in the disabled we refuse to grant better opportunities, in those we strike with bombs and torture, and the soundless death of the apathetic soul.

To accept this litany of death as inevitable is to empty the resurrection of its power for today. A resurrection faith faces the cross and protests its finality. It educates us to see as God sees; to act as so many of God's chosen do act today, when with enormous courage they refuse to genuflect to the powers of darkness that use suffering and death as their tools to keep power.

The resurrection of Jesus is a proclamation that this outcast from Galilee is the beloved of God who cannot be held in the keep of death because someone else takes action. Jesus did not raise Himself; God raised him. The truth that God raised Jesus from the dead gives hope and help to all those who want that miracle repeated in the midst of life. The belief that God's work continues — not least because of Jesus' words. "I am the resurrection and the life." Today.



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, we can all catch something of the reality of the resurrection when we experience new life in the midst of hopelessness. We see it in hospital wards, when tired nurses hug people back from death. We see it in the men and women who risk their lives protesting against the mindless violence inflicted on their fellow human beings. We can see it in the beloved disciples who see in the dark what no one else sees. For all this, we rejoice. It is Easter in our midst; it is the refusal to accept that anyone should be left for dead. Let us therefore sing with the Psalmist on this glorious day of Easter: "This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad." Alleluia!

CHILDREN OF GOD, HAPPY EASTER SUNDAY.



PEACE BE WITH YOU!

