

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Apr 24th 2011

EASTER SUNDAY - MASS OF THE DAY

First Reading: Acts 10. 34, 37-43

Peter dominates the first part of Acts. It was he who first addressed the Jews, and here in the household of the Roman Cornelius whose conversion was one of the great events in the early Church, Peter delivers the first address to the pagans. It represents in the main kerygma or line of preaching adopted in the primitive Church, a survey and a very good one, of the main events in the life of Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 117. 1-2, 16-17, 22-23

This psalm is the last of the Hallel psalms and was used at the Feast of Tabernacles, a festival celebrating the ingathering of the harvest. There is a call for general thanksgiving. In the second stanza a deliverance from peril is brought to mind. The third contains a reference to the rejected stone and this is most apt at Easter. The corner stone was a huge block put in the ground to tie two walls together. In the New Testament Our Lord is seen as the corner stone. The stone symbolises the Jewish nations, rejected by the pagan world, but restored by God to a place of honour.

Second Reading: Colossians 3. 1-4

In his Letter to the Colossians Paul deals with the errors in their faith and brings them face to face with risen Christ. In the reading they are urged to turn from the things of earth to heavenly things. In four short verses the Greek for "with" occurs three times, thus defining the new relationship in Christ.

Alternate Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8

A basic law of morality had been breached and Paul bluntly tells the Corinthian Church to expel the offender. Yeast, because of its fermenting, was usually used to denote something evil. So the Corinthians must get rid of every trace of this corrupting influence, just as the Jews cleansed the house of every particle of yeast before the Passover at which only bread without yeast was used.

Gospel: John 20. 1-9

John's narrative of the Resurrection passes over much detail found in the other Gospels. In fact the same may be said of the Gospel as a whole. The reason is that he selected aspects of our Lord's life to make them vehicles of the teaching he wished to impart. So here John gives enough to serve his purpose, the final Glorification of Christ.

In studying John's account, his interest was two folds: (1) to give the evidence that led him to immediately understand and believe, and (2) to give enough evidence to lead anyone to belief if a person is willing to believe.

The changed lives of the Lord's disciples are indisputable evidence. It is psychological evidence that they became new creatures of enthusiasm and motivation. They were propelled by a dynamic power and bold courage. Within thirty days they were seen proclaiming a risen Christ from the very spot where their lives were being threatened. They were preaching to the very people who were seeking to arrest and execute them. Only one thing could cause them to adopt this strategy: the Lord had indeed risen, and He had implanted within them a dynamic new power never before experienced by man.

God proclaims in Scripture that He is (exists) that He is love, and that He has shown his love supremely by sending His own Son to save a lost and dying world. What God wants from us is love and belief, love for the Lord Jesus and belief in the supreme power of a loving God. This is just the point of the resurrection account. We are to believe because we love even as Mary and John loved.

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