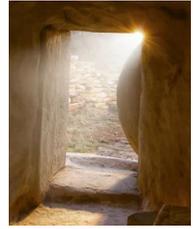




AMDG
EASTER SUNDAY
YEAR B,
4TH APRIL 2021



Christ, my hope, has risen!

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son
have conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.

We have come, finally, to the season of joy and hope, following a long season of anguish and suffering. Many have struggled with the darkness of the past year. Many more have wept at tombs, asking 'where?', 'how?', 'why'? We have all been asked to carry crosses. Some of them have been almost unbearably heavy. Now, though, alongside his own cross, we stand with Jesus victorious and risen in glory.

We might be coming to this new season hesitantly, like the younger disciple (*Gospel*), perhaps still hurting from the scars of the year and hardly daring to hope. Or we may find ourselves, like Peter, rushing headlong, eager to see and to believe.

In the Acts of the Apostles (*First Reading*), we hear that the first witnesses were to go out with this good news and proclaim it to all people. We are the messengers of the Gospel today.

And we are to bear witness by living 'unleavened' lives (*Second Reading*) full of truth, sincerity and humility.

As St Ignatius said, 'Love is shown more in deeds than in words'. Haven't we seen that this past year!

So let us rejoice and be glad, and give thanks to the Lord (*Psalm*) this coming week.

SECOND READING 1 CORINTHIANS 5: 6–8 (alt.)

You must know how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough, so get rid of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be. Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed; let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I try to prepare myself for prayer by becoming still, by entrusting myself into the care of the Lord and to the guidance of the Spirit.

I note how I am feeling, and how I am approaching the Lord on his day of Resurrection. Perhaps I would like to begin with praise.

Then I move to what I am most in need of at the moment.

I speak honestly.

As I read this teaching from St Paul to the church at Corinth, I ponder ... what am I noticing? To where am I being drawn?

Am I feeling called to respond in some way?

Many have made bread during the pandemic. We may remember flour shortages during lockdown. Perhaps I can imagine Jesus making bread now; his strong, workman hands gently sifting the flour and mixing the water. I might like to imagine myself making bread with him now, in my kitchen.

What is it like to stand and work alongside him?

Is the Lord asking me to allow him to make of my life a completely new batch of bread? A life not puffed up with old yeast, but 'full of sincerity and truth'?

Might he, the Bread of Life, be calling on me to feed others?

The pandemic has been a time of sifting and discerning for many.

What has been taken from me? What have I had to let go of?

What continues to be important to me?

And where have I encountered fresh 'unleavened' people during the past year?

I end my prayer by becoming aware of how I am feeling now, as I bring the thoughts of my heart to the Lord.

Glory be ...

GOSPEL JOHN 20: 1-9

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,' she said, 'and we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

After I have become still, asked for the help of the Spirit and read this Gospel passage slowly a few times, I may like to pray using my imagination.

With Mary, I might go to the tomb. Why does she go while it is still dark?

What is compelling her – me – to be with the Lord's body?

I may ponder my desire. We see the stone rolled away and I note Mary's reaction – is it excitement, fear, distress?

What am I hearing and seeing? How do I myself want to respond?

When they hear the news, Peter and John run to the tomb – do I run with them? Do I step into the empty tomb with them?

If so, what is striking me as I enter, and what it is like to be there?

I might wish to touch or pick up the cloths.

Like John, does this lead to an affirmation of faith for me?

I may wish to conclude my prayer by remaining in the quiet of the tomb when the others have gone. I consider how I am feeling and ponder, perhaps, a new, deeper understanding of the Lord's love for me.

I end by speaking with him from the heart.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Now we are those witnesses.

First Reading

His right hand raised me up.

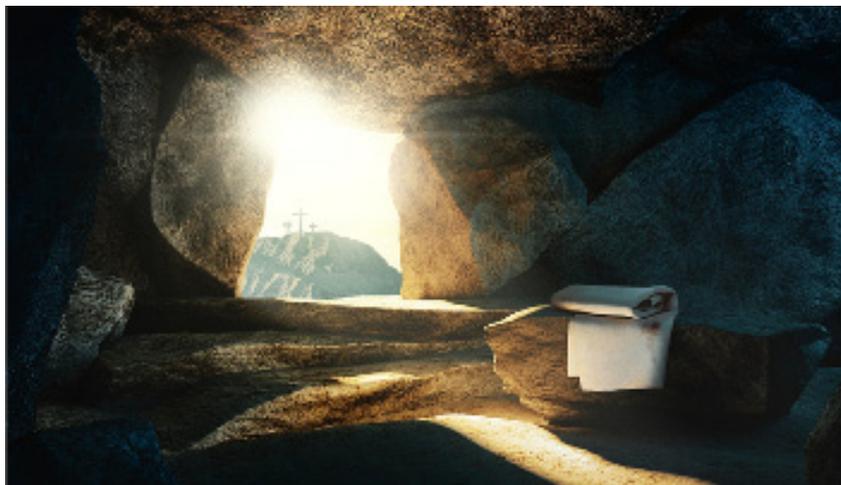
Psalm

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign!

Sequence

This week's texts if you want to explore further:

Acts 10: 34.37-43; Psalm 117 (118); 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8; John 20: 1-9



'He saw and he believed'



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
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JESUIT
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