

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord A2026

I want to start this homily with these words of St Peter to his compatriots: "This man (Jesus), God raised on the third day and granted he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10: 40-41).

These words define the whole meaning of the event we are celebrating today. They come from the mouth of an eye witness who tells us the truth of what happened to Jesus of Nazareth: he is risen; he is alive. God, indeed, raised him from the dead. He gave him life back. Those who killed him were convinced that everything was over with him. They thought that his name and his teaching were buried with him forever. But, they were wrong to consider our Lord as an impostor and blasphemer. God exonerated him by raising him from the dead.

That is the reason of our joy and our celebration today. The resurrection of our Lord is the central event of our faith that has transformed the world and human history. If Jesus did rise from the dead, says St Paul, our faith would have been in vain. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, perhaps, people would have been talking about him as we do with important personalities that have marked world history, like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or Eisenhower, etc. But, all that would be just a chapter in history books.

It is because Jesus is alive that we are gathered here today to celebrate and billions of people throughout the world sing alleluia. The resurrection of our Lord gives us an assurance that we have a future. We might pass in this world through many difficulties, conflicts, crises, and suffering but these do not define the whole meaning of our life. They do not give the whole picture of our life.

The resurrection of our Lord reminds us that we are destined to a bright future in God's house. As Jesus became a man and shared in our life, so will we share in his resurrection. His resurrection from dead is the guarantee of our own resurrection and the pledge of our eternal life with God in heaven.

The resurrection of Our Lord can be approached only in faith for only faith can see beyond the eyes of human body and to understand beyond the human mind. So is the witness we find the Gospel of today. When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb that Sabbath, they were taken by surprise: the stone was removed from the tomb, the burial cloths trailed on the ground and the tomb was empty: Jesus is risen. When the angel appeared to them, he reassured them: the crucified you are looking for has been raised just as he said. Even when Jesus himself appeared to them later on, it was in order to confirm what they already knew: He is Risen.

On that day, everything became clear to the disciples who understood that the passion and the death of Jesus were part of God's plan to give life to the world. Of course, there was the sorrow of Good Friday with its tears and sadness, but that was not an end in itself. Who could resist God's power to give life anew? Did not Jesus himself say that whoever believes in him will never die and even if he dies, he will live? Could he really fail to apply that same teaching to his own life?

For us human beings, Christ's resurrection means that our own physical death is not an obstacle to the flourishing of God's life in us. With the God of Jesus Christ, there is no more boundaries between death and life. Like Christ, when we die God gives us life anew, since we believe and are baptized in him. Christ himself makes us participate in his own resurrection. His resurrection is our resurrection.

That is the good news of Easter, namely that no matter what we endure in this life, God will not abandon us in the tomb. He will intervene in our favor because of his faithfulness and fidelity to us. And then, we will understand that we would not have run in vain; we would not have accepted so much sacrifice for the sake of our faith in vain; we would not have lived our Christian commitments with so much courage, determination and abnegation for nothing.

Easter pushes us to raise our eyes above in hope, and wait with trust for our redemption. No matter what we endure, God will raise us up. That is why the resurrection of our Lord challenges us to trust Jesus firmly and hope with eager patience for our redemption.

So, we understand that there is an important lesson we need to learn in every suffering we endure. There is never a Good Friday without its Easter. Easter affirms that we will never be abandoned by God, that nothing is ever hopeless.

In the joy of the resurrection we receive some among us to different sacraments of the Church. Pray for them as we all pray for one another. Let us bring them to the light of Christ that dispels the darkness of sin so that they become in him new creatures. Happy Easter to all of you!

Acts 10: 34a, 37-43; 1 Corinthians 5: 6b-8; Matthew 28: 1-10



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Contact: www.mbala.org

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