

Reflection for Easter Sunday Year B

Some parts of the Church this year, but not all, have been able to gather and celebrate The Easter Triduum albeit in restricted numbers. Other areas or countries, due to ongoing lockdown restrictions, have been unable to gather. This is a far cry from last year where very few places of worship were able to be opened and the majority remained closed. However, as restrictions have now eased a little, there is a now a smile on peoples' faces with the hope that there might be a new-found freedom in the not too distant future. As spring is now upon us, we might be able to hope for a summer where we might be able to do all those things that we have missed over the last year due to the pandemic. Likewise, as the Church celebrates the Easter Mystery, we too hope for a new springtime and freedom in our lives. As a pilgrim people of faith, we look forward with a renewed sense of hope to a lifegiving and enthusiastic faith. Our Lenten pilgrimage of faith this year, probably a virtual experience as it proved to be for many, is now complete. Our challenge as people of faith, during this Easter season is how can we read the signs of the times, as we emerge from lockdown in what we might call the post-pandemic Church? Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus we might be a bit frightened or disconsolate as we try and figure out what is the best path forward. We can also feel a bit lost as well. However, the encounter of faith between the two disciples and the Risen Lord was in fact the catalyst for them to be rejuvenated and return to Jerusalem with a renewed enthusiasm that Jesus had risen from the dead. Likewise, we are going to have to find creative and innovative ways to express our faith and the meaning of the Gospel both in the church and the world as we slowly emerge from the impact of the pandemic. These are some of the challenges to our faith. We have celebrated the Easter Mystery and now we start the season of Easter. Let us find ways to express our faith in credible and attractive ways for a post pandemic Church and world. That surely is our goal during this Easter season. Perhaps these words of Romano Guardini might help keep us focussed in the weeks ahead.

“Jesus’ Resurrection revealed what from the beginning was the living essence of Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God. When we reflect on our own existence, we can see it as a movement that began in the darkness of childhood, a childhood which we can remember only to some extent. This movement climbs, reaches its summit and then begins to decline so that it eventually shatters, regardless of whether it is more or less fulfilled or comes to a premature end. This curve of the trajectory of our lives begins at birth and ends at death. After death lies a darkness that is so daunting that it is not clear how we could have even moved into life. The decline of our life’s curve ends in a darkness over which hovers a vague sense of hope.

This ordinary movement of the human life did not occur in the case of Jesus Christ. The trajectory of life’s movement began for him not in birth but arcs backward into eternity, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58) Some scholars wrongly hold that these words were produced by a mystic of the second century, a hundred-some years after Christ. In fact, these words originated from Jesus. Moreover, the curve of Christ’s life does not decline into death but moves throughout his entire life into eternity. “They will kill him, and on the third day, he will arise.” (Matthew 17:23) The life of Christ has an entirely different depth and breath, an entirely other relationship to death than ours. In his existence, death is only a transition, though one filled with complex meaning. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus asked his disciples, “Must not the Christ suffer everything in order to go into his glory?” (Luke 24:26) The resurrection brought to full realisation what Jesus always bore within himself. To deny the resurrection is to deny everything in Jesus’ essence and self-consciousness that is connected with his Resurrection. What then remains is not worthy of Christian faith.”