

EASTER SUNDAY

Welcome to this most important day in the liturgical calendar of the Christian church the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

John's account of the resurrection tells us how Mary of Magdala was the first disciple to go to the tomb after Jesus death.

When she found that he was missing, her first thoughts were that someone had moved him elsewhere.

She had no idea that he had risen from the dead.

She ran to tell the others and we hear how they also saw that Jesus was not in the tomb.

Its amazing isn't it that until then they had all failed to understand Jesus teaching about his death and resurrection.

So the penny finally drops and they begin to understand that Jesus must have risen, although there were some who still had doubts.

As John's gospel moves on from today's passage it describes how, after the Disciples left, Mary M went back into the tomb where she had an encounter with the risen Jesus, and she went back to tell the Apostles about it.

However it was not until later when the Apostles, except Thomas, were assembled in a room, still fearing for their lives, that, Jesus appeared amongst them and they finally fully appreciated the miracle of the resurrection.

Our first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, The acts of the Apostles gives an account of the early days of the Church and today's reading has a definite point to make about the flow on effects of the resurrection, because Cornelius, who was a Roman Centurion, had a vision where an angel told him to send for Peter. What Peter had to say to Cornelius and his household had a profound effect on them as they were filled with the Holy Spirit and were baptized.

This passage explains that Jesus expected the church to spread out from the Jews to the Gentiles and subsequently to the whole world.

Jesus resurrection is a victory

We have all witnessed many victories in our time.

For instance,

The victory of the allies over Hitler

The victory of the people of Russia and Eastern Europe over communism

Great victories, where evil has been overcome.

And there are many other similar victories.

But Christ's resurrection is a victory of a *totally* different Order—nature—and magnitude.

All other earthly victories, no matter how great, pale into insignificance beside it.

Jesus victory is one of cosmic and eternal significance.

Our image here of the ascending Christ is titled *Christus Vincit*, Latin for Christ conquers.

Through His death and resurrection Christ has conquered sin.

His victory over sin and death is the definitive triumph of God, in Christ, which gains for us access to eternal life in Heaven.

As Paul says in the second reading, through baptism we have died in Christ,

He is our life.

He shares with us his risen life so that our ordinariness, our dreariness, is capable of being elevated to a level of virtue and holiness unattainable without His life in us.

The **strength and power** we get from Jesus also brings the knowledge that whatever is sinful and destructive in the world will ultimately be defeated.

This great triumph of God in Christ is what Easter is all about.

So then today is a day of great joy of rejoicing and celebration. The horrors of Good Friday are behind us, and the resurrection of Jesus has given:-

A new meaning to human history

A new destiny to creation

And a new value to human dignity and human life.

So we say

Alleluia, the Lord Jesus has risen.

Nothing can ever be the same

Let the joy of Easter touch our hearts

Let the light of the risen Lord light up our minds

Let the love of God energize us

And may the peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding; be with us all on this holiest of days.

May God bless you with a happy and holy Easter.