



Allocutio



Presentata Curia 28th April 2011

Allocutio: His body changed status!

A voice somewhere says, “What use is Resurrection to me? I don’t want to come back to this world with its troubles and disappointments and betrayals. And if there is another world could I just do without a body. Could I not stay as a spirit? The idea of a resurrected body does nothing for me.”

So what is Christ’s resurrection saying to us? I think it is saying much more than something about a body. But it also implies something about the body. Clearly as the Gospel said earlier today the Risen Lord did show a resurrected body since he emphasised that he was not a ghost and asked for food to eat just to illustrate the point. But the resurrection is saying many other things. And the accounts speak of apostles and disciples filled with joy and a new energy from what they witnessed.

The truth is that life is a struggle. We can put such efforts in at times. We and put our whole energies into something, make sacrifices, and then all that effort is undone or falls apart. For example parents can put so much into a child and the child goes astray or dies or in some way causes them disappointment, maybe grief and depression. Or someone you put so many efforts into finding a cure for from ill-health dies on you. A nation or government puts huge efforts to get their country straightened out and instead they are let down on agreements and their energy is knocked out of them.

But we also know of situations in which everything seemed to be lost but it is in fact about to turn out well. What a joy to have got back safely the Apollo 13 crew in 1971? Or to have found those Chilean miners last year? Jesus uses the word joy about the father of the prodigal son or about the angels in heaven over one sinner who repents.

So resurrection is about recovery, rescue, triumph and an even better outcome than expected, especially after it all seems to go wrong. Obviously the disciples were utterly knocked down by what had happened to Jesus on the Cross, compounded by their own inability to help him. “Project Jesus” had turned out a disaster. So what joy to find he was not dead and not only not dead but displaying a new and obviously upgraded version of the human being. For anyone who comes through closed doors must be an upgrade!

“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory!”
Necessary? Yes, necessary. Because Jesus had to go through what is a reality of the



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human condition and experience the huge effort and project he had undertaken go wrong just as we all have to endure something like that at times ourselves. What God is saying to us in the Resurrection is this: the human struggle is going to come right and turn out well. In the Resurrection of Christ we are getting a preview of the end. If you like Christ is modelling the future for us.

But where it is meant to touch us is in our deep inner beings which are so full of hopes and desires but where let-downs of all sorts have damaged us. Deep down God wants to give us hope and to show us that all our struggles and efforts are going to turn out victorious. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus spoke of their hopes, hopes that now seemed in vain. But their dashed hopes were about to be lifted beyond all expectation. And for you and me the resurrection has the same message: hope. Your struggle and efforts are not going to be in vain. The resurrection helps us fight the temptation to go into despair.

But I still have not answered my original question: why resurrect the body?

I think it was St. Thomas Aquinas who said that it is our nature to be composed of spirit and body. So we are incomplete without a body. Our spirits may survive death. Indeed our faith tells us they will. But given that our mode of living and doing and seeing and speaking and interacting needs a body we are going to be very diminished without a body. All our efforts of this life are going on in and through our bodies. We learn to walk, work, interact, communicate and generate with our bodies. We learn to build, give service, and express love through our bodies. We know for instance that our capacity to have language depends on part of our brains. If we leave our brains behind we won't be able to speak or maybe even put thought together. And we even know it here in this life whenever someone is given cause to say to us, even in jest, "Did you leave your brains behind or something!" Death will be the definitive experience of that! In death we will lose those bodies which more than any other part of us will display the complete failure of life on us in this world. Our bodies seem doomed to a catastrophic failure in the end.

It is for that reason that our bodies must be part of the Resurrection. The resurrection of the body will proclaim the victory of our efforts and struggles and the overcoming of that collective and individual weakness that was always pulling us down.

I think we have all experienced some minor moments when we sighed with relief or joy and felt: it was worth it after all. In the resurrection our struggles will be rewarded and



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we will experience that sense of it having been worth it all to a level that is beyond our dreams. And we will be grateful to Jesus who made it all possible and to his Father who had the vision to create it and to the Spirit who allowed us into existence.

Amen.

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