



Allocutio



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Allocutio: We worship the Risen Christ.

If a guy rises from the dead you have to take him seriously. Any guy who can die and then rise with a new life has to be held in awe and listened to with great reverence. And if he comes back from the dead with a new life that shows healing of body and soul and now has capacities he never had in this world then we all have to stop and take notice. How did he do it? Can he show us how that is done? Can I be like that?

The disciples who had been with him on this side of death and who saw him on the other side realized this was for real. How else would they have gone out and risked everything if they didn't believe this is a breakthrough for us all! If they faced death themselves and didn't balk it is because they were utterly convinced of what they had witnessed.

They knew that this man had something for every human being. As St. Peter once said, "To whom shall we go Lord; you have the message of eternal life!" And as the years went on they realized that this message given by Jesus and proved by him was something that had to be passed on for posterity.

St. John tells us that if all the things that Jesus said and did were to be recorded he supposes that all the books of the world would not contain it all. What the evangelists wrote in the Gospels was to ensure that future generations would be in contact with the essentials of the way, the truth and the eternal life he came to bring.

A young man ran up to Jesus when he was in this life we are in and asked him what he had to do to gain eternal life. Jesus gave him a verbal answer but the full answer lies in everything that Jesus did and said and above all in his final heroic act of self-offering on the Cross.

Jesus truncated it all on that first Sunday evening on the road to Emmaus: Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer and so enter eternal life? And he said this in so many other ways. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it cannot bear much fruit." If a man saves his life he will lose it but if he loses it for my sake he will gain it.

The message of the eternal life Jesus displayed on Easter Sunday is all in the gospels. We must get to know this Jesus and get to know him fully. The Gospels show us the way, the truth. We therefore cannot cherry pick passages we like and put aside others we find inconvenient. Yes, there is the mercy of God, yes there is the message of encouragement but there is a warning too in Jesus words, alerting us to the fact that we can get lost and go astray. As he said himself not one dot, not one iota of the law can be put aside.



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Some love those passages of Scripture which speak of God's anger and retribution and damnation. They, like James and John, desire that brimstone and fire would come down from heaven and consume and destroy the wicked. They do not hear what Jesus has to say about not being angry with your brother. And they do not hear Jesus saying, "Look to the plank in your own eyes first!" There are those who say that God loves us all so why get too anxious. But Jesus, the one who rose from the dead, and therefore knows what the other side of death is like, has warned us of hell and of many being left outside God's kingdom.

"Ah Father sure that is old stuff that went out a few years ago." The problem is that only Jesus has come back from the dead and he is the only guide to making it to eternal life. The one other person who has shared in what he has, Our Lady, has never deviated from this in all her statements. She continually points to her son and the full message he gave. At Cana she is recorded saying, "Do what he tells you!" And in all the private revelations the Church has recognised we hear no contrary statement.

The greatest way we can respond to the Easter event is to take the full Gospel, without any reservation, to heart. Pope Francis is at pains to urge us to hear its full message. That means stopping, listening, chewing over, applying to my life and embracing even the parts I find hard. We must especially be attentive to wherever we find resistance because that can be instructive. It may be showing us where we have to grow, repent, change and may ultimately be my road to eternal life.

But finally again we just have to take Jesus seriously, more serious than anything else. The guy who rose from the dead is the master. He is not too far away. He is the same for us as he was for the Magdalene. He was near her although she didn't recognise him. But once recognizing him what did she say? "Rabbuni! Teacher." Let us open our hearts to his full teaching. May it not just enter our hearts, but our hearts and actions and our whole being.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill