

EASTER SUNDAY, Year B

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”

These words which we heard at today’s Mass will resound in the Church’s liturgy throughout the octave of Easter, for it was on this day, the first day of the week that Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life, rose from the tomb! He has destroyed death forever!

The bodily Resurrection of Christ is an event which is historically attested to by the disciples, who encountered the Risen One. Their own witness, as found in the various writings of the New Testament, attest to Christ’s physical Resurrection from the dead.

The Resurrection is the greatest of all Christ’s miracles and the confirmation of all His works and teachings. e.g. He said:

‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’ (Jn. 2:19)

‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ (Jn. 11:25)

The Paschal Mystery: by His death, Christ liberates us from sin; by His Resurrection, He opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God’s grace, “so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rm. 6:4)

The *Troparion of Easter*, from the Byzantine Liturgy:

‘Christ is risen from the dead!

Dying, He conquered death;

To the dead, He has given life.’ (See CCC, n. 638)

St Augustine offers the following words of encouragement in relation to the Paschal Victim, the Lamb who redeemed the sheep:ⁱ

“[Christ] had the power of laying down his life;
we by contrast cannot choose the length of our lives,
and we die even if it is against our will.

He, by dying, destroyed death in himself;
we are freed from death only in his death.

His body did not see corruption; our body will see corruption
and only then be clothed through him in incorruption
at the end of the world.

He needed no help from us in saving us;
without him we can do nothing.

He gave himself to us as the vine and the branches;
apart from him we cannot have life.”

Lord Jesus, help us to celebrate your Resurrection from the dead, not only as a historical event that took place many years ago, but as *our* liberation from sin and death and our means of living in newness of life. As we await your second coming, help each one of us to understand the dignity of the human person and the dignity of the human body — for we believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

ⁱ From a treatise on John by St Augustine, *Liturgy of the Hours*, Vol. II, Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1976.