

St Saviour, Pimlico
Easter Day, Year B

08.04.12

Exodus 12,1-8, 11-14; Psalm 116.12-end; 1 Corinthians 11.23-29; John 13.1-17,31b-35

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, alleluia!

One of the reasons why faith in Jesus Christ first spread, and continues to spread so successfully is due to the tremendous power of its symbols - a truth that those who have participated in this Holy Week know only too well.

The praise and acclamation of Jesus as we follow his triumphant entry on Palm Sunday; the great humility of Jesus as he washes his disciples' feet; the outpouring of Jesus as he blesses bread and wine and gives himself as food for life's journey; the loneliness of Jesus as he waits for his betrayers in the Garden of Gethsemane; the despair and utter desolation of Jesus as he cries out in agony from the cross.

And those of us who gathered here today before dawn, before day break, like those women on the first Easter Day, know only too well the power of these symbols too: The Easter fire that can never be extinguished, the Paschal candle that is the principal sign of Resurrection faith, standing here proudly and boldly, burning bright.

These are mighty signs and symbols, and they represent a living faith.

Ours is a living faith, brothers and sisters, in a God who is alive, and who no one could ever suppress, and who, unworthy as we are, invites us to share in his mission. We die with Christ to ourselves. We acknowledge that we are nothing on our own, yet with him we have great strength - the strength to rise up, the strength to belong.

And so the most fundamental, the most essential symbol of all - water. Water without which we could not live - the water of life, the water of Baptism.

The reason why we keep this Holy Water by the door of the church is this: to remind us daily, every time we enter

this sacred space that we have been marked out for Christ, we belong to the Lord. In Him we are a new creation, and baptism is his greatest gift - freely offered, and without any charge. Baptism is the gateway to life in the Spirit, and for the Christian it is where all service begins.

So as we enter this space we should always pause for a moment at this Holy Water, perhaps let it run through your fingers, perhaps make the sign of the cross, and reflect - remember that you belong to Christ - remember Him in your life - remember that he reached out his arms in love and that those arms were nailed to a cross - remember that he died and that he lives now for you.

Despite our many challenges, some of which we share, some which are very much our own, thank God for Jesus Christ - risen, and alive. May He be Lord of our lives, of each other, of this church. And may our lives be so enriched by his generosity that we share this great bounty with others - through our thoughts and through our deeds.

Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, invites us to come as we are to the living water, the water of Baptism, and be incorporated into him - re-membered - so that we grow as the living body of Christ - his hands, his mouth, his feet - fit for service in our twenty-first century world. And he says to us this, as he says to Mary in the garden on that first Easter Day, "don't cling on!" - "let it go" - he is always leading us forward, to brighter days - to live as people of hope.

So today rejoice, and with Christians throughout the world delight in these mighty symbols - this Resurrection faith - for Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Let us then celebrate the feast.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!