

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST – ALLELUIA - B

Today we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and Paschal Time begins during which we celebrate for seven weeks the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead right up to Pentecost Sunday. The gospel reading gives us the account of Peter and John running to the tomb and on finding it empty, they believed. The first reading in Paschal Time is from Acts of the Apostles and today we listen to Peter's words explaining the mission, death and resurrection of Jesus to Cornelius and his household. In the second reading Paul teaches now that Christ has gone back to heaven 'you must look for the things that are in heaven where Christ is...'

The **First Reading** is from the Acts of the Apostles. This New Testament book is part two of a history of the rise of Christianity, the first part being the gospel according to Luke. They became separated when, about 150 A.D., Christians wanted the four gospel accounts bound together in one volume. The author, Luke, was a Syrian from Antioch, a doctor of non-Jewish origin, who was a close friend of Paul accompanying him on his second and third missionary journeys. Luke collected a great deal of evidence from a variety of sources which he edited. The book deals with the primitive Jerusalem community under Peter's leadership, the spread of Christianity to Samaria and the gentile peoples and the early days of Christianity in Antioch. From chapter 13 Luke deals with Paul's three missionary journeys and ends with Paul a prisoner in Rome.

Today's reading, 10.34,37-43, starts with Peter addressing Cornelius and his household. I recommend you read the whole of chapter 10 where we learn Cornelius is a Roman centurion, a gentile, and Peter has a strange dream from which he learns that the gentiles, too, were to receive the Good News about Jesus. At the end of the chapter the Holy Spirit descends on Cornelius and his household and Peter realises he cannot refuse them baptism. In the reading we have an address by Peter to the household, possibly the sixth such address by Peter in Acts, in which he summarizes the gospel story emphasizing the same points as Luke brought out in his own gospel account. In the middle of the address we read the words: "and they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet on the third day God raised him to life." These words, with "according to the scriptures" added, became the first stage of the creed. By raising Jesus from the dead God has solemnly invested him as supreme Judge. On this Easter day we proclaim through the words of Peter that all peoples are called to share the risen life in Jesus.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 118.1-2,16-17,22-23, is one of the six Hallel Psalms (113-118), psalms which the Jews recited at the great feasts including the Passover supper. They are songs in praise of God. Psalms 114 and 115 are sung at Sunday Vespers. Psalm 118 is a psalm of thanksgiving and may have been sung as the procession entered the Temple during the feast of Tabernacles. For us this psalm, on Easter Sunday, is a perfect response to the news of Jesus' resurrection: the Lord is good, his love has no end; the Lord has triumphed, I shall not die, I shall live; he is the corner stone of all his works, a marvel in our eyes.

The **Second Reading** is from St Paul's letter to the Colossians. In this letter Paul is trying to deal with Jewish speculation which the churches at Colossae had taken up. They thought the celestial or cosmic powers were responsible for the regular movement of the cosmos and attached an importance to these powers that threatened the supremacy of Christ. Paul writes to show that these powers have a subordinate place in the scheme of salvation and that Christ, raised up to heaven, governs the whole cosmos which is influenced by the saving act of the one and only Lord of all creation.

The reading, 3.1-4, comes at the end of a passage in which Paul has been warning the Colossians against the errors mentioned above, if you can read from ch.2.7. This is difficult Pauline teaching. He warns against false philosophies and false asceticism based on the principles of this world. He brings the Colossians back to sound Christian teaching with today's reading. They do not live by the wisdom of this world but by a life-giving union with the glorified Christ. As a result of Christ's life-giving death and resurrection we have been raised to be with Christ, our thoughts should be in heaven not based on earthly philosophies. Our new life is hidden in Christ but will be revealed when Christ comes in glory at the end of time. We proclaim Paul's confident teaching.