

## Easter Sunday 2021

A Reflection by Fr Sylvester O'Flynn OFM Cap., Rochestown, Cork

# Christ is Risen

I like the story about an ageing flower-lady with an outdoor stall. Her clothes were old and shabby, her face weather-beaten and wrinkled. A regular customer asked how she was always in good form. "It's my friend Jesus", she replied. "Good Friday was the worst of days. Three days later, Easter Sunday, the best of days. So, when I have a problem, I know that if I wait three days, Jesus will overcome it for me."

If ever the world needed a message of light and hope it is this year of the Corona pandemic. The flower-lady knew that Easter is not just an event of past history but her friend Jesus is a living reality.

Pope Francis tells us: *"Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated the world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history."* (The Joy of the Gospel, 276).

### Not all doom and gloom



The pandemic is proving to be a challenge bringing out the extraordinary goodness of people. It hasn't been all doom and gloom. Recalling the words of Pope Francis, however dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. That is the dynamism of the Resurrection.

If you feel overwhelmed by the bad news why not take out biro and paper to write a list of the good things that have happened. Much of the old sense of neighbourliness was being lost as

more and more people have moved from rural life to urban, but restriction of movement resulted in city people getting to know their neighbours. People became more aware of housebound neighbours and volunteered to do their shopping. Volunteers young and old came up with marvellous ideas. Chefs out of work came together to cook delicious meals for the housebound. Sports clubs organized their members to deliver meals. Factories changed production so as to supply medical equipment. Retired medical staff volunteered to come back. Confined by travel restrictions, people have taken up gardening and rediscovered a child's wonder at the awesome development of tiny seeds. Some individual starts a project to raise funds and the response is extraordinary. The response of the Irish people to a genuine cause promoted on the *Late, Late Show* is overwhelming.

### **Christian values**

Practical love, manifested in care of our neighbour is the greatest proof of God's presence. We are told that we are living in a post-Christian society. But the evidence before our eyes is that the Christian inspiration is alive and well. To quote again from Pope Francis: *"Values always tend to reappear under new guises, and human beings have arisen time after time from situations that seemed doomed. Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelise are instruments of that power."*

The rising of Jesus from the dead was the most important day in human history. Saint Paul was so convinced of the essential place of the resurrection that he wrote that if Christ is not risen then all his preaching and all our believing is in vain. He saw clearly that the resurrection is not simply a past event but a present reality. Paul's conversion occurred when the risen Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Paul asked the vision, "Who are you?" The answer, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:5). Two beliefs were revealed. Not only is Jesus risen from the dead but his followers, whom Paul was persecuting, are intimately united with the Lord.

In proclaiming the mystery of faith, we say that Christ is risen, present tense. The celebration of Easter is not complete until Christ is risen in you and me. Christian not only in name but also in behaviour. At baptism our personal candle received light from the Paschal Candle of Easter. That is why we renew our baptismal commitment at Easter. Whether you are availing of a streamed or televised service, or on your own, why not light a candle as a reminder of your own baptismal union with Christ. And if everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world it would be!

### **Renewal of baptism**

Risen Lord Jesus, this Easter Day I wish to renew my relationship with you which began at my baptism. May I be Christian not only in name but in fact. With the support of the Holy Spirit, I resolve to resist the temptations of the devil. I renew my personal relationship with you as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

You are the Way whom I resolve to follow in all the moral decisions I make.

You are the Truth that I wish to follow according to the Creed and the teaching of the Church.

You are the Life, and I wish to walk my life each day in the prayer of personal friendship.

Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory.