

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY C 07

In the long fifteenth chapter of the first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul gives a very explicit account of the resurrection of Jesus, and what it means for us today.

Also in each of the Gospels we get a striking account of the events that took place on the first Easter Day.

Last Easter we read Mark's account – his is the briefest and in some ways the least satisfying.

Mark's Gospel ends with silence, fear and the flight of the women.

But what happened just before that? There is the announcement of Jesus resurrection: he has been raised from the dead.

And he will be seen in his resurrection body!

Mark began his Gospel narrative announcing that God was beginning His new creation. His Gospel concludes with the sign that new creation has come. **Death has been defeated and the power of evil is now limited: now we can look forward to God's reign with confidence.**

As we discover in the other Gospel narratives and in the writings of St Paul, Jesus appeared to his disciples and continued to teach them as well as charge them with the care of and mission of the church.

In these appearances He was bodily present, he was no ghost or some strange spiritual being of one sort or another. He was Jesus - but in his resurrection body.

We too, can look forward to “putting on” our resurrection body on the Last Day when the dead will be raised and our perishable body will be raised imperishable.

What happens to us as we await for our resurrection on the Last day?

More particularly, what happens between my death and the resurrection on the last day?

Where will I be?

Jesus gives us two very important clues:

Remember how he said to the dying thief: “Today you will be with me in paradise”

And how in John 14 he tells his disciples: “Let not your hearts be troubled.....in my Father's house are many dwelling places.....and I will prepare a place for you...so that where I am, there you may be also..”

After our earthly death we will be with the Lord, in the place he has prepared for us, a

place where – outside of time and space – we await our resurrection on the last day when God will bring in the new heaven and the new earth – when we will experience the kingdom of God in all its glory.

Jesus' Resurrection means that we can look forward with confidence to the time when God's reign will come in all its glory.

Jesus' Resurrection means that there will be an end to all the pain and suffering that currently blights our existence.

Jesus' Resurrection means that there will be an end to all tyranny and oppression and there will be the time when justice and peace will be the reality for the whole of creation.

Jesus' Resurrection means that we can live with both a sense of optimism and hope.

Before his ascension Jesus gave clear tasks to his followers.

Amongst them was the command to make disciples of all nations, baptize them, **and** teach them to obey **everything** he had taught them!

In other words Jesus has given us a measure by which we should judge each action and decision we are going to make:

And that measure is: **“What would Jesus do in this situation?”**

And our passage from Luke [Luke 6:17 –26] today reminds us that as faithful disciples we may well find ourselves being unpopular!

So, in our context we might ask questions like these:

What would Jesus have us say to the refugee and Asylum seeker who turn to us for help?

What would Jesus have us do for the hundreds of homeless and lost mentally ill in our society?

Does Jesus expect us to act with scrupulous honesty in public and private life?

And so the list could go on, but I am sure that you get the picture.

As Christian men and women we live the reality: **Christ is Risen!** Jesus is alive from the dead. With this faith we can confidently face whatever the future will throw at us.

It is this faith that has enabled our Sudanese friends to rise above the terrible suffering they have endured, to settle in a strange land halfway around the world, and to constantly exude joy and peace, to face their future with confidence – whether that future be here or in the Sudan. It is their resurrection faith that makes them the

wonderful people that they are.

Because Christ is Risen, we can go back into our past and deal with, and get rid of all our demons. We can live in the present, even in times of great suffering, knowing that Jesus is alive and walks with us, by our side. What God has done for Jesus - he will do for each one of us.

It is a wonderful thing being a Christian:

We don't just cope with life;

We live ABUNDANTLY – because we have the indwelling of the Spirit - celebrating something of eternity now.

And, in the Eucharist we get a fore taste of the kingdom as we share in the meal our Lord himself gave us:

A meal in which He is both our guest and our host!