

The story of salvation is sprinkled with momentous moments. There was the moment, lost in history, when God, who needed no one, shaped a man and a woman in His own image. There was the moment when God chose for Himself a special people through whom *“all the families of the earth would be blessed”* (Gen 12,3). There was the midnight clear when the heavens opened and the very Son of the living God embraced the limitations of our human condition, coming to know in the flesh, both the glory and tragedy of our nature without ever having sinned. In the last moments of His life, Jesus completely hands Himself over for us. There was the dark afternoon when God-in-flesh *“uttered a loud cry and breathed His last”* (Mk 15,37).

Marvelous as these moments were—creation and covenant, crib and cross—these moments, preludes in a divine drama, pale in comparison with this Day of Resurrection: *“He is not here; He has been raised”* (Lk 24:6). God loves us, pardons us, saves us completely without restrictions, conditions, or limits; in absolute humility, availability, vulnerability and mercy. For us.

*For us:* mercy and love that seeks to embrace a traitor, a thief, and a coward. Yes, for us Jesus rose for humankind, but for every human being, the good and the bad, the betrayers and the deniers, the givers and the takers of life, the young and old and everyone in between. Those slender monosyllables summon us to worship. But they also are so full with meaning that they call for prayerful contemplation with Francis and Clare. *“How holy and how loving, gratifying, humbling, peace-giving, sweet, worthy of love, and, above all things, desirable: to have such a Brother and such a Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down His life for us”* (St Francis, Prologue 13).

On this blessed day you and I thank God for the incredible grace to declare in the Sunday Creed: *“On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.”* Jesus is alive, alive in His humanity and in His divinity—the very same person who was born in Bethlehem, walked the dusty roads of Palestine, died in anguish on Calvary’s cross. St Paul expresses this vividly, declaring: *“If the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain; your faith is futile; you are still in your sins”* (1 Cor 15: 14,17).

If Jesus remains dead this morning. If the sun does not burst over our horizon. If a shaft of light does not pierce this darkened tomb. If the body remains lifeless, undisturbed by Jesus, uncommitted to God and to others this Easter, then it will be because you and I do not offer Him new flesh, new hands, a new heart in which He can rise. The resurrection of Jesus will be proved, not by arguments over an empty tomb, but by proof of “filled up” lives. *“Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were indeed buried with Him, through Baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life”* (Rom 6:3-4). Do you not know that you are the body of Christ?

Alive to God in Christ Jesus only makes sense of Calvary’s wood and the rock of resurrection. Weakness becomes strength, love conquers fear, miserable despair transforms into resurrected hope, and perpetual death gives way to eternal life. Charged with a significant requirement: *“This is what the Lord requires of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God”* (Mic 6:8).

Act justly. God’s justice is fidelity to relationships, to responsibilities—to God, to people, and to the earth. Love God above all else. Love every human person, friend or enemy, as a child of God. To reverence the beauty and goodness of all creation, as a gift of God, to be shared generously.

In particular—to live the charge Jesus said would determine if we are to rise together with Him and live with Him forever: *“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed Me, naked and you clothed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you visited Me. Whatever you did, for one of these least sisters and brothers of mine, you did to Me”* (Mt 25: 35-45).

Such fidelity to relationships is the new life born of water and the Spirit, raised to new life with Jesus, to share that life and its responsibilities. Alive to God in Christ Jesus as people in whom He lives, in whose hearts He dwells—lives that are poor in spirit, full of mercy, thirsty for justice, makers of peace—so that He might continue to work of giving mercy and peace, forgiveness and healing in a world still gasping in the pains of death.

The tomb is empty but we are filled. We are filled with the Risen Christ, and to find deep within our lives the power to heal and the power to love. We are the body of Christ, risen to life, sent forth into the world to care and cherish an earth which stands bathed in the Light of Easter morn.



