



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **The Easter Vigil Year A**

### ***The light of Christ can never be extinguished***

*Readings: Genesis 1:1-2:2, Ps 103, Genesis 22:1-18, Ps 15, Exodus 14:15-15:1, Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18, Isaiah 54:5-14, Ps 29, Isaiah 55:1-11, Ps 12, Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4, Ps 18, Ezekiel 36:16-28, Pss 41, 42, Romans 6:3-11, Ps 117, Matthew 28: 1-10*

It was the famous Ebenezer Scrooge whose response to contemporary Yuletide festivities was simply, 'Bah! Humbug!'

Yes, I know it's not Christmas but my response to much of the public indulgence of the great seasons of Lent, Holy Week and Easter is not far removed from Dickensian dismissal. Media religion presents anything from glutinous twaddle on the favourite hymns channel through to heretical meanderings on the more upmarket broadcasts for the chattering classes. The same talking heads who have inhabited the airwaves for the last thirty years on the BBC continue to pour out the dreary accommodation of watered down theology with sociological zeitgeist. They perpetrate a religion no one would live for and certainly no-one would die for, a baleful soup of weary nostrums of niceness and a strain of philosophical vegetarianism – content lite. The exclusion of red blooded orthodoxy from the media diet is almost total.

This all came to a head driving back one afternoon recently and listening to a Lenten meditation on Radio 4. The woman novelist, a good writer, was treating us to her thoughts on Jesus. She did not believe in the Resurrection. She thought the idea that Christ died for anyone's sins was, frankly, grotesque. She added that she was not 'a conventional Christian'.

I don't often roar at the radio, particularly while driving, but I felt obliged to respond, 'Madam, you are not a Christian at all. You are not at liberty to hijack the name of Jesus and attach Him to your own potty ramblings'.

Undeterred by my intervention, she continued. The only hope of future life we had was in our gene pool. We continued to live in our descendants. This is fatal for the childless and, consequently, pretty bad news for Jesus (not to mention His Blessed Mother). Luckily Jesus, apparently, has survived as a good idea, a good example. Well done, Jesus.

But Jesus is not a good idea. His life, example, teaching and death make no sense whatsoever outside the understanding of a divine plan for the redemption of Man. We are not here to celebrate a concept or a mythos or a well-intentioned bloke who came to a sticky end. As a priest, I do not go to the bedside of the dying to reassure them that their only hope lies in the gene pool or to close the eyes of those who did not achieve this modest task.

We are here, brothers and sisters, because the great God Almighty, our Father and Creator, has seen the pitiful plight of our fallenness and our fatality and has condescended to come among us. He has shared our

living and our dying. He has taken to His immortal divinity the little frailty of Man and plunged us through the gates of death and translated into eternity. We are here because of this almighty and magnificent salvation, this act of love and mercy beyond our comprehension. We are here because the Light of Christ can never be extinguished. We are here because, in Him, sin and death, Man's last enemy, have been defeated. We are here to rejoice with the Heavenly Powers who exult at His rising and ours. We are here to pray with and thank God for those first witnesses of the Third Day and the successive generations of the one ,holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church who have passed the torch and witnessed to the divine encounter with Jesus and led us ever onward through the penitential way to the Calvary. We are here to stand at the altar of the Cross, before the sacrifice that reconciles Heaven and Earth. We are here to give the deepest thanks as adopted children of the Father, little brothers and sisters of Jesus for our salvage from the scrap heap of mortality.

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