



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Easter Sunday-April 4th 2021

***Readings: Acts 10: 34. 37-43, Psalm 117, Colossians 3: 1-4,
John 20: 1-9***

There are three popes whose service has earned them the entirely unofficial title 'GREAT'.

They are Gregory the Great, the sixth century pontiff, to whom the native faithful of these islands owe a unique debt of gratitude. Nicholas I, ninth century and, despite his soubriquet and undoubted virtues, largely forgotten.

And Leo – the 5th C giant of the office.

(In our own time there has been a spontaneous upsurge of support for a fourth candidate for greatness, St. John Paul II.)

It was with great joy that I opened the Office of Readings in Passion Sunday week to discover that Leo was topping the bill that morning.

There are some Christian writers whose work is unencumbered by the baggage of centuries and whose writings go straight to the heart of the matter, cutting through time and culture. Leo is one.

He is able to articulate the great mysteries in an accessible way without dumbing them down.

So, when he speaks about the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus, this is not mere abstract theology. Leo has lived it all. Leo, you will recall, apart from his extraordinary wisdom and holiness, was the Pope who rode out from the gates of Rome to confront the 'Wrath of God', as he was

known, Attila the Hun. Leo sat in his saddle conversing with the brutal, genocidal, imperialist thug and persuaded him to leave the Eternal City unsacked. No mean feat. As a result, I think we can assert, without fear of contradiction, Leo's courage and his indifference to the prospect of suffering and death. So, when he writes about the Calvary and death, he is speaking with some first-hand knowledge.

Here Leo describes the Cross.

'How marvellous the power of the cross; how great beyond all telling the glory of the passion: here is the judgement-seat of the Lord, the condemnation of the world, the supremacy of Christ crucified.

Your cross is the source of all blessings, the cause of all graces. Through the cross we receive strength from weakness, glory from dishonour, **life from death.**

There is one sacrifice in place of all other sacrificial offerings, there is also one kingdom gathered from all peoples.

The power of His death once confronted our death. By dying He submitted to the laws of the underworld; by rising again He destroyed them. He did away with the everlasting character of death so as to make death a thing of time, not of eternity.'

Here is the key to what we celebrate today.

His divine life has destroyed the power of death.

Embracing death in His humanity He has overwhelmed and defeated it in His divinity.

Many look at the Faith and wonder why, if the Resurrection is really true, truly possible, we have to die at all.

Leo explains that in that simple phrase above. I repeat.....

Jesus on the Cross 'did away with the everlasting character of death so as TO MAKE DEATH A THING OF TIME, NOT OF ETERNITY'.

We still die in time. We live in Eternity.

It is this that we celebrate here today and throughout Christendom. And we do it most appropriately, as always, by offering the Mass, the supreme sacrifice of God's love by representing, courtesy of the Holy Spirit of God, the Calvary – the very place where time is transformed by eternity and the co-inherence of God and Man brings the glorious victory of immortality in this otherwise doomed mortality of Man.

This is the moment when we celebrate the transformation of the tragedy of Man from the tyranny of time into the liberty of divine of divine love and the freedom of forever.

The gates of Paradise are swung open.... The way home is before us. Glory and honour and praise and thanksgiving to Jesus unto the ages of ages. Amen.

CHRIST IS RISEN. HE IS RISEN INDEED. HALLELUJAH