



Mass of the Easter Vigil - The Victory Won - the Triumph Begins

Homily by Fr Robbie Low

Readings: Genesis 1, Genesis 22, Exodus 14, Romans 6:3-11, Mark 16:1-7

We meet in the dark with rumours swirling around the Holy City.....

We meet in the dark with the disciples defeated and depressed and terrified, hiding and waiting for the Authorities knock on the door and the prospect of possible imprisonment and death.

We meet in the dark with the implausible and emotional accounts of the Women at the Empty Tomb echoing in our ears.

We meet in the dark with the word on the street that the tombs of the holy ones have been opened and rumours that their spirits walk the alleyways of the City of David in a foretaste of the General Resurrection

We meet in the dark with the soldier guards undone by the appearance of Angels rolling back the stone and fled to report the incident to a perturbed and paranoid authority.

We meet in the dark amidst rumours of the damage to the Temple. The dividing line between God and Man, the veil which obscures the Holy of Holies, has been torn in two. The place where the High Priest alone may enter but once a year on the Day of Atonement and be alone with the Almighty before coming out to declare, in words that echo through the history of the world, God's holy and sacred Holy Name. That quintessential being, I AM WHO I AM, who is revealed in Jesus Christ as creator of all that is, redeemer of all who will attempt to follow Him.

As the night westers from the East into the far horizon, we are waking up , with generations of the Apostles, to the glorious reminder of our eternal destiny, sabotaged by sin in Paradise, restored on this hilltop of brutal sacrifice as children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom.

Thus, the fire lit, the prayers sung, the Paschal Candle, symbolising the Light of Christ blessed, lit and processed, the signs of God and the wounds of Man clearly etched on its very corps, the light is spreading, candle by candle from the source of light Himself.

And we hear the great hymn of triumph echo down the nave of the universal church and out across the world.

Rejoice....Rejoice..... Exult.....Heavenly powers, sing choirs of angels – exult all creation around God’s throne.

EXULT....

The very origin of the word is a powerful emotion and dynamic motion.

Ex – out of Salire - to jump.

The song proclaims a picture of the Host of Heaven literally jumping for joy.

The reason is the victory of Christ,, the triumph of the Son of God over the sin of Man and the powers of the dark , so long in disobedient warfare with the love of God.

The triumph is declared. The Trumpet of Salvation sounds.

Satan’s rebel army is dragged in captive chains behind the glorious procession of the victorious king.

The Earth is filled with the glory of God. Darkness is vanquished and vanishes for ever.

The Church, Our Mother, lit with the lightning bolts of Christ’s Glory, rejoices beyond words and the whole building shakes with joy.

This is the ultimate ‘WOO HOO’ moment of human history and the salvation of eternity.

This is the secret, hidden in plain view, at the heart of every Mass.

Sin is nailed to the Tree of Death. Satan, in his moment of apparent victory, has been fatally deceived – As Christ as Man, in death, entered the realms of Hell, so the Christ as God has harrowed Hell, overturned the rule of the dark Lord, the mortal enemy of Man, released Adam and Eve from the bonds of mortality and time and restored them to the eternal destiny of Paradise and the Presence of the One whose love, in disobedience, they betrayed. Their story is ours.

As, in the great Resurrection Icon, Christ draws them out of the dark dungeons of their doom and ours, by their wrists – no power of themselves to help themselves – so the fate of Man is determined.

The Sacrifice for sin accepted. The medicine of immortality administered to the dying. And we, the dying, declare....

O happy fault !

O necessary sin of Adam that won for us so great a redeemer.

This is the night, of which it is written, that shall be as bright as the day.

This is the night whose power washes away our sin, casts out wickedness and restores our lost innocence.

To ransom this slave, Lord, you gave away your only Son.

So, mindful of the party that is going on in Heaven just now, let us both

‘Rock this Joint’ and overflowing with joy go out and tell the world the story of their redemption, if they will but receive it, and proclaim the miracle of the Third Day.

WOO HOO or more familiarly....

HALLELUJAH HALLELUJAH HALLELUJAH.