

Easter Day

'See, I am making all things new'

On Friday evening, at a service of 'Tenebrae', a word meaning 'darkness', I was reflecting on the meaning of Jesus' Passion, his suffering and dying. At the end of the service, which is held in darkness, a final candle is snuffed out, at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross. As the Word of God is proclaimed: 'It is finished!' Jesus has fulfilled his mission on earth. In his death, God has reconciled his world to himself.

Today, on Easter Day, having reflected on His suffering and dying, we reflect on the meaning of Jesus resurrection. The Easter service is a service of light. The tomb is empty. Jesus appears to Mary. Suddenly, everything feels different. Somehow, everything has changed. The powers of this world, evil, sin and death, have been conquered. The glory of God, has been revealed.

In the Old Testament, the glory of God was revealed to the people of Israel through God's acts in history. In the New Testament, the glory of God was revealed to all the world, in Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God, in the flesh.

According to the Apostle Paul, 'the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers' so that they cannot see the truth, though it lies open before them, before their very eyes. 'By the open statement of the truth,' he says, of those who have come to believe 'we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

In the empty tomb, and in Jesus appearances to the disciples, the resurrection may be regarded as an historical event, like any other. An ordinary, natural event, leading to belief.

There is no reason or excuse to cheapen the character and value of a truth that is open to general reasonableness. To ordinary human understanding. A truth, and an event, that has transformational power. That has the power to set us free. As Jesus said, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Within Israel, God's acts in their history, in revealing God to them, sparked a faith in them. A trust in God's promises to the them for the

future. Now, in God's act to raise Jesus from the dead, God has revealed himself now to the world. Sparking faith now among all the people of the world. A trust in God's promise for the future, as this has now been revealed in Jesus resurrection. Which means that his history, is their future. His resurrection, is the promise of their own. For all who risk their trust, their life, their future, on the fact of God's self-revelation, in the resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus resurrection is a well-established fact. Something you can place your trust, your life, your future on. An event that transcends faith's understanding of the event. Because it is founded in the reality of God himself. In the God who has revealed himself in it. As we surrender our life, in faith, hope and trust, into the hands of the God who created us, we surrender ourselves, too, into a new understanding of reality.

An understanding of reality as history - the history of God's presence in, and interaction with, his world. A history, a reality that is revealed in the particularities of history. In which even the revelation of God himself, takes place in history. Has taken place, in the history of Jesus.

By faith in God, and in God's promise, the ancient people of God had a part in the future fulfilment in Jesus Christ of the promises given to them. A fulfilment that, in the form of a resurrection from the dead, was very different from anything that they might have been able to imagine. By faith in God, and in God's promise, the modern people of God have a part in the future fulfilment in Jesus Christ of the promises given to them. A fulfilment that, in the form of a resurrection from the dead, will be very different from anything that they too might be able to imagine. A fulfilment that will come, only from the future. A fulfilment that will come, only from God himself.

A fulfilment that has come today, though not in any final way. A victory that has come today, though not in any final sense. An act that has come today, that awaits final confirmation, from the future.

On that day, God himself will come in final judgment of the world, and of its merely human kingdoms. The powers of this world - evil, sin, and death - will be destroyed. God will himself his own kingdom in this world. God will himself become 'all in all'.

Of Christian hope, in the future of God's kingdom, no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.

And yet, it has been revealed, in advance, in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. In whose history, is our future.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”