

I Corinthians 15.12-20

Here Paul presents one of the central arguments of the Christian faith: what is the point of the resurrection, if not that we too shall one day be raised just as Christ himself was raised? As Cyril of Jerusalem says, 'If the cross is an illusion, the resurrection is an illusion also, and "if Christ has not risen, we are still in our sins". If the cross is an illusion, the ascension is also an illusion, and everything, finally, becomes unsubstantial' (Catechetical Lectures, 13). In other words, if Jesus didn't really suffer, die, and rise again for us, then we might as well give up and go home, because our message would be in vain. Indeed, we would have spent our entire lives living a lie! In such a situation, it would not be unreasonable or surprising for others to feel sorry for us.

Thankfully, however, Paul reminds us that we have no need of pity, because the claims of the Gospel are true. Because Christ our Head died for us on the cross, and was raised to new life, we need not fear death, and can be confident in the hope of the resurrection for us, the Body. Thanks be to God!

Elements of the Mass

Ciboria

The ciborium (from ancient Greek 'kiborion' and Latin 'ciborium', meaning a ceremonial drinking cup), is a chalice-shaped vessel, normally made of precious metal, used to contain the sacramental bread during the mass, and particularly the hosts to be received by the people. It is also used to contain consecrated hosts that have been 'reserved' – locked inside a tabernacle or aumbry, for the Communion of the sick. The ciborium apparently came into use in the early middle ages. 'Ciborium' is also a word used to describe a canopy on four pillars over an altar, also known as a 'baldachino'.

17th February
2019

Third Sunday
before Lent
Sixth Sunday of
the Year

Happy are you!



St John Chrysostom points out that virtuous living will not bring praise from all people. 'You see, it is not possible for a virtuous person who travels by the straight and narrow path and follows Christ's commands to enjoy the praise and admiration of all people – so strong is the impulse of evil and resistance to virtue.' In this respect, criticism and even outspoken opposition to the Christian life and mission of the Church can be a hidden compliment. St Paul reminds us of the foundation of the whole building: the resurrection of the Lord. Happy are they who put their trust in the Lord and blessed indeed who believe in him. Wherever the church loses the saltiness of the gospel, wherever we hide the light of Christ's risen glory under a bushel basket of compromise and conformity with the world, there the Beatitudes in St Luke's Gospel turn into woes and warnings. The Lord tests mind and heart. Let us therefore seek true happiness in the footsteps of the crucified and risen Saviour, whom the world rejected but who leads us to life.

Prayers to Remember

O Lord God, who hast called thy servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown: Give us faith to go out with a good courage, not knowing whither we go, but only that thy hand is leading us, and thy love supporting us; to the glory of thy Name.

Eric Milner-White