

EASTER: THE FULFILMENT OF HUMAN DESIRE

Tonight something really wonderful has happened: someone has risen from the dead! I don't mean revived, but risen. Jesus Christ, true man, true God, has become the first Person in human history really and truly to rise from the dead. And this changes everything: the universe, the future, your life and mine. In nature, every plant and animal has an innate trajectory, an in-built programme, a course of development. In humans we call it the natural law. This natural instinct, in every human mind, will and heart, makes us seek the truth, the good, the right thing to do, love and happiness. Everyone wants to be happy but this God-given drive is satisfied only when we transcend ourselves and are united with God himself. Indeed, we yearn for immortality. We want to live forever. We shrink from death; we dread ceasing-to-be; we reject annihilation; we naturally long to reach God, to survive, to find eternal happiness in a life to come. *Tonight* all those deep human desires are fulfilled. For as we sang in the Exultet: THIS IS THE NIGHT CHRIST BROKE THE PRISON-BARS OF DEATH AND ROSE VICTORIOUS FROM THE UNDERWORLD. Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia!

Now *last night at the Vigil* we blessed the Easter Candle, a symbol of the resurrection, a light shining in the world's darkness. This candle speaks volumes. A fruit of creation, made of the wax of bees, and work of human hands, it uses up its own mass to give off light, and the self-sacrificing light it gives off is not cold and harsh but warm and loving. It beautifully symbolises Jesus himself. // In our secular culture, this candle reminds us of our own task too: to be a light, to be an example for others, to be a witness to God in our world. Here at the cathedral, in the evenings I often go out for a walk to say the Rosary. I like the changing scene, but the lights of the city are usually so bright, you can rarely see the stars. Our culture is a bit like that: so busy, so bright, so absorbing; it can easily block out God and the sacred canopy of the angels and saints; it horizontalises our lives and obscures the vision of our eternal destiny. This is really dangerous, because it divides us up; it truncates our spirituality and skews our moral values, our search for truth, goodness and love, which is why people live more and more for the moment. Yet without God, without faith and hope, our culture will lack love, and we see this already in the rejection of the unwanted unborn, the handicapped, the mentally ill, and increasingly the elderly.

But *tonight* let us rejoice! WE BELIEVE St. Paul says, that HAVING DIED WITH CHRIST, WE SHALL RETURN TO LIFE WITH HIM. So let us get rid of THE OLD YEAST OF EVIL AND WICKEDNESS. Easter Sunday answers our deepest yearnings and prayers. It transforms our life with happiness. It changes everything. Risen from the dead, Jesus has taken his humanity to heaven, to be the new Adam, the perfect Human, the model of how to live a fully human life in accordance with the natural law. This is why His Way is our way too, to truth, goodness, love and happiness. If you want to know the Truth: look to Jesus. If you want to know how to live: look to Jesus. If you

want to know how to be happy: look to Jesus. If you want to overcome death and live forever in Paradise: look to Jesus. *Tonight*, as we pray for our country, family and friends, let's let go of the old. Let's let go of our old selves. Let's let go of sin, selfishness, sadness and lovelessness. Instead, let's light up our lamps. Let's be Easter candles. Let's open our hearts to the new, to joy, to the Risen Christ, to Jesus whose Heart is the salvation of all who trust in Him.