

Easter III
4/14/2024

SOMETHING REAL

Two things that most people find rather frightening are a corpse and a ghost. One is a body without a spirit and the other is a spirit without a body. Jesus rose from the dead in a real human body still bearing the wounds of his passion. The resurrection of Jesus is something real. Jesus doesn't merely live on like the dream of Martin Luther King or the way some people claim Elvis is still alive.

Jesus entered this world through a human birth entered in a real, concrete, physical, factual way. He came not as someone like us but as one of us, to be one with us. As Jesus' entry into this world was marked by a real human birth, so too, Jesus' resurrection from the dead, his birth into new life, is something that comes in a real, concrete, physical, factual way. *Look at my hands and my feet...touch me...a ghost does not have flesh and bones...do you have anything to eat.* Jesus is truly risen, in a true body, a body that has flesh and bones, a body that eats.

The risen Christ is neither a corpse nor a ghost. Jesus is present in a real but glorified body. He wasn't merely resuscitated the way Lazarus rose from the dead. He still bears his wounds and yet he isn't subject to physical limitations.

All this tells us something, not just about Jesus, but about ourselves. Each time we recite the creed we profess our belief in the resurrection of the body. In the end, new life will involve not just our souls but our bodies. Whether in heaven or hell, our bodies will be involved. Our goal is to share in the eternal life and love of God, in the life of the Trinity in both soul and body.

Like those early disciples, as Christians, we're witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To be baptized is to share in Jesus' death and resurrection, his Paschal Mystery. A separated soul certainly lives on but it's incomplete without a body. Like Jesus, we will have a new embodied existence, truly related to our bodies in this life and yet glorified and freed from organic disabilities. Christ will raise us up on the last day but it's also true that, in one sense, we've already risen with Christ and ultimately, our resurrection will take place in a real but glorified body.

At every celebration of the Eucharist, the saving action of Jesus' death and resurrection is made present to us and we renew our faith in the risen Lord so that we might share in the eternal life of God, in both soul and body. So that we might receive and respond to the love of God with lives of intentional faith in every little way. God is love. God loves us. God desires our love.

Here in the Eucharist, the word of God continues to be revealed to us and here in the Eucharist, Jesus really comes to us in a real, concrete, physical, tactual way. He continues to truly come and he continues to be truly present. He continues to make a gift of himself to us as he did through his death and resurrection. He gifts himself to us and asks us to gift ourselves to him. *He wants to be close to us but we may want to be close but not too close say, "Jesus, you might cramp my style.* He no longer asks for something to eat but instead he gives himself to us as our food. e—He asks for our faith. He asks for our love.