

## Monastic Scribe XXV: April 15, 2022

### Easter Parade

Why would any person really believe in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ or of anyone for that matter? It defies any experience that any of us have had. It is certainly contrary to the prevailing cultural position that dominates us which is that of materialistic science. This theory proclaims that if something cannot be proved in the external world of facts, it just doesn't exist.

But, for 2000 years, people have believed. Our faith is based on the testimony of those followers of Christ, particularly the apostles (which includes Mary Magdalen). They certainly did not expect the resurrection. They had nothing to gain by proclaiming it. In fact, it meant that many of them were expelled from the synagogue and were alienated from family and friends. It meant defying the ruling Roman class and the homage to the emperor. The apostles were radically changed by the resurrection. Paul, then known as Saul, persecuted Christians and was hell bent on destroying this new cult. Then he had some kind of encounter with the risen Christ and the rest of his life was dramatically changed. And the result was an amazing, rapid growth of the number of disciples of the Way, soon to be known as Christianity. The whole story is beyond explanation.

I think many people have a strange understanding of the Resurrection. It didn't mean that Jesus was resuscitated in the tomb and stood up and walked out. It was rather a case of a "new creation", going beyond limits of time and space. Icons in the Eastern Churches portray the event of the "Anastasis" as Jesus rising with Adam and Eve, David and Bathsheba and all who went before him. It was an event of community that touched everyone and everything. Jesus then became in his human body, which was now completely embraced by his Godhead, the Cosmic or Universal Christ. This is the Christ we encounter today in the Church, the world and the Eucharist. We are all promised to share in this resurrected, cosmic Christ.

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that we all go through two resurrections. The first is in this life when, as Thomas says, we awake! Yes, awake to justice which means for him awareness and care for all right relationships in this world and a sense of oneness with all. I think, today, that means, we would be acutely aware of the climate crisis, of racism and all forms of discrimination, of nuclear disarmament, of all injustices in the world, our country, our church.

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In awakening, Aquinas says, we arise from the capital sin of “Acedia” which, as Matthew Fox writes, includes “depression, despair, passivity, denial, boredom, a shrinking of the mind, in short, “couchpotato-itis.” In the same way, Pope Francis has repeatedly characterized indifference as prevalent in our world. Madeleine Albright is quoted as saying, “We live in an age of self-absorbed moral numbness”. Aquinas says we are called to rise spiritually from the soul’s death to a life of justice. As we awaken, a new creation emerges. We find a mystical union with God and creation that is a form of ecstasy.

This is our preparation for the second resurrection after our earthly life is ended. For seven weeks of Eastertide we reflect on what this resurrection means as we hear the gospels of Jesus’ talk with Nicodemus (Baptism); the feeding of the 5000 (Eucharist); images of the resurrected Christ as the good shepherd, the vine and branches, the commandment to love. These are important weeks to come to understand who we really are as disciples of Jesus, preparing for our own resurrection. Easter time ends with Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These weeks are much more important and more significant than Lent. They call for prayer and reflection. “Rise, you who sleep, and rise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten you.”

Here is a poem.

### **“Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire”**

(based on Colossians 1:19-22) by Sylvia Kessmaat and Brian Walsh.

In the face of a culture of death / a world of killing fields / a  
world of the walking dead / Christ is the head of the resurrection  
parade transforming our tears of betrayal into tears of joy / giving us dancing  
shoes for the resurrection party.

And this glittering joker / who has danced in the dragon’s jaws of death / Now  
dances with a dance that is full of nothing less than the fullness of God.

This is the dance of the new creation / this is the dance of life out of death And in  
this dance all that was broken / all that was estranged / all that was alienated / all  
that was dislocated and disconnected is reconciled / Comes home / is healed and  
made whole.

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Happy Easter everyone! From Tim: [joycet@glastonburyabbey.org](mailto:joycet@glastonburyabbey.org)

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Please note that I do not speak on behalf of Glastonbury Abbey, the Archdiocese of Boston or the Catholic Church, though I hope my faith is in harmony with all these. Any error in judgment should be credited to me and not anyone else.