

Easter 2020

Beloved Ones, let us declare to the world around us: “Oh death, where is thy sting? Jesus Christ is Risen! Indeed He has Risen! Trampling down death by His own Death!” Tonight (Easter morning), we joyfully celebrate that Christ has Risen as He said! The crucified One, has now been raised from the dead! He has conquered sin and death. His is the undeniable Victory! His is the undeniable Credibility! He told us that He would be crucified, that He would die, and on the third day, would Rise again! He has kept His word- for God is always faithful to His promises! His is the irreversible Victory over sin and death! His Resurrection is attested to, not only by the Gospel, by St. Paul, by Josephus (a Jewish Historian, and not a believer), by a Roman Historian, Tacitus, in 65 A.D., who was and unbeliever:

‘Nero.. punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius; but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also’ (Annals XV. 44)

Tacitus corroborates that Jesus was: 1) a historical person; 2) executed by Pontius Pilate in Judea; 3) by 65 AD (time of Nero) the Christian faith had spread across the Mediterranean to Rome from Judea – and with such an intensity that the emperor of Rome felt he had to deal with it. Notice as well that Cornelius Tacitus is saying these things as a hostile witness since he considers what Christ started a ‘pernicious superstition’; namely, that He was the Son of God who rose from the dead.

Evil had its way with Christ the Anointed One of God. The evil one tried to destroy Him, His newly formed Church, and the Eucharist—but he could not! Jesus vanquished hell and emerged victorious! The Resurrection is the proof that validates everything that Jesus said: He is the Son of God who has the authority to forgive sin and reconcile us to God; He is the universal call of God to abandon selfishness and sin, for love of God and our neighbor as the means to true happiness; He is truly present in His Sacraments and preeminently in the Eucharist; He is the infinite Divine Mercy of God, always, for those who come repentant and seeking forgiveness; He is the validation of God that He is the means to eternal life and communion with God and all who have gone before us! Because of the Resurrection you and I can truly say, without hesitation: “Jesus, I

trust in you. Have mercy upon me a sinner!” Because He did rise from the dead, His victory over evil and falsehood and injustice, suffering and death, is total, incontrovertible, and irreversible. In Him and through Him and with Him, we have the hope of eternal life! The empty tomb of Jesus now stands as the witness to this fact, (even now, the stone which once held His body and bears witness to His bodily Resurrection and bares the echo of that moment. The electronic instruments used to survey the tomb and the stone when placed on the stone, were apparently overwhelmed by the energy that still emanates from it, when the tomb was newly renovated by scientists only a couple of years ago).

However, we are also reminded that the Risen Lord did not appear to those who thought they had power over Him, who tortured Him, who then murdered Him; He appeared to simple men and women who believed in Him. Jesus reminds us in this time of darkness, that the brightest light of our lives can only be seen when we open the eyes of our hearts in faith; Christ is not only Risen from the dead; He is alive, now, and truly with us, even though we are separated by being sequestered from the Sacraments, He is with us, now, and will not hesitate to rush into our hearts when we say: Come, Risen Lord, dwell in my heart!