

“Do this in memory of me.” – A phrase used wherever the Eucharist is celebrated every day in all the different languages of the earth.

A simple phrase; and yet, the depths of God’s love is enfolded in those six words.

When we hear it at Mass, does it stir our hearts, or go in one ear and out the other, and is then quickly forgotten?

I know as well as anyone how easy it is to take everything for granted; to forget all that the Lord has done, and is still doing, out of love for me.

Let’s call to mind the Lord’s promise to us: “I will not forget you! See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.” Is. 49: 16

Hands, which bear eternally the Good Friday wounds of His love for us.

So, today, let us: “Call back into our memory the gifts we have received – creation, redemption, and other gifts [of grace] – so as to ponder with deep affection how much God has done for us.”

Pope Francis: Open Mind, Faithful Heart; p. 101

Then, memory isn’t something from the past that accompanies us like a dead weight; memory is the grace of the Lord’s presence in our present reality, reminding us of His: “Unfailing love and faithfulness.” Ex. 34: 6

In this present reality of this Eucharist, Fr Paul will say: “Do this in memory of me.”

With those words, the present reality of bread and wine will become the eternal reality of the Body and Blood of Jesus.

But, all of that is rooted in the memory of the Church; the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday.

The Eucharist is the recalling – the memory – of the Lord’s Passion: there in the Passion is the victory.

Today, the Day of the Resurrection – as is every Sunday – can’t be understood without the Cross.

In the Cross is the history of the world: grace and sin, mercy and repentance, good and evil, time and eternity.

‘Do this in memory of me’ reminds the Church of the word God speaks; the memory of His promise:

“Fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name; you are mine.” Is. 43: 1

However, when the Church tries to live her life by side-stepping the Cross, we find ourselves shut in a dark tomb with the stone firmly rolled shut so that we can’t get out.

By trying to live the resurrection life without the cross; then we, like Satan, think we can do it alone; do away with Jesus.

We must never forget that: God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.” Col. 1: 19

Jesus, Christ and Lord, really suffered and died on the Cross.

Jesus, Christ and Lord, really rose bodily from the dead.

Jesus, Christ and Lord, is really alive among us – today, here and now.

A single detail in the Gospel for today tells us that, and goes to the very heart of Easter.

“Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.” Jn. 20: 1

The stone was rolled away!

But not just a stone across the entrance to a tomb: the Resurrection of Jesus means that the huge stone that separates us from God was rolled away and, in Jesus, the way is wide-open for us to receive our Father’s embrace.

It’s as though a room was shrouded in thick darkness, and Jesus rises to pull aside the blackout-curtain to flood the room with His light, to show us that eternal life is possible for all of us.

But, there is a doubt that darkens my Easter: can I really be changed, and filled with the Holy Spirit?

I might feel the stone in my life is too massive, too big for the Lord to roll away.

Last night, the Easter Vigil began in darkness, and that darkness represents all that's devoid of light: evil thoughts; whatever is hidden and secret, deceitful and dishonest, immoral and sinful. It's the darkness of the world, and the darkness in my heart.

The Easter Candle – symbol of Jesus rising from the dead – is lit, and carried into the darkness of the church.

Bit by bit, other candles take their light from it, and the light spreads out and overcomes the darkness.

The light we were given in Baptism – the light of Faith – will dispel the darkness, and roll the stone away.

We all come to Easter with our personal memories of failings and sins.

The unfailing mercy and faithfulness of God, in Jesus, gives us the grace to heal those memories.

The grace to let the light of Easter light up my life.

The grace to hear Jesus calling me by name, inviting me to discover a living, personal relationship with Him.

No better day than Easter Sunday to respond to that grace, so that Jesus can roll the stone in my life away