

Dear Friends,

On the 2nd of June this year we give thanks to God for the Ascension of our blessed Lord Jesus the Christ when He returned to heaven with His glorified Human Body. It occurred forty days after His amazing Resurrection from the dead which is an historical fact, though many arrogant individuals try in vain to disprove it.

St. John Chrysostom (c.344-407), wrote: "Bethlehem bare Him, Nazareth nurtured Him, Capernaum had Him continuously as an inhabitant".

St. Cyril the Philosopher (c.826 A.D. - 869) interestingly wrote: "The Father from heaven is witness of the Son, the Holy Ghost is witness, descending bodily in the shape of a dove; the Angel Gabriel is a witness, bringing glad tidings to the shepherds; The Virgin Mother is His witness; the manger at Bethlehem is His witness; Egypt, which sheltered Him for a little while, is His witness. Simeon and Anna in the Temple are His witnesses; John the Baptist is His witness; Jordan is His witness among rivers; Tiberias among seas. The blind, the maim, the dead raised to life, are His witness. Even the devils are His witness. The miracles are His witness. Gethsemane is His witness, and to our imagination almost shows Judas still; Calvary, the place above all others, is His witness in the sight of all nations; the Sepulchre in the garden is His witness, and the stone which lies there to this day; the sun now shining is His witness. The Mount of Olives is His witness. And the Twelve Apostles are His witness, not only by their presence and their words, **but by their sufferings and deaths.** Never had One so many witnesses."

I would also add the thousands who became Christians a few days later at Pentecost having experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ; and the millions down the centuries whose lives were transformed for the better through believing in and following and experiencing His presence and love.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) wrote concerning the Love of Christ: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. Thou, O Christ, hadst greater still, laying it down even for Thine enemies; for while we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to Thee and Thy Father by Thy death. What other love can be, has been, or will be, like Thine? "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die!" but Thou sufferedst for the unjust, dying for our sins! For Thou earnest to justify sinners freely, to make slaves brethren, captives coheirs, and exiles kings! A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance! Thou was offered because Thou willedst it. Thou didst bow Thy head, because Thou wast 'obedient unto death'. Death is indeed a great weakness; but to die thus is matchless power; for 'the weakness of God is stronger than men'. Worthy, then, love so inestimable, humility so wonderful, patience so insuperable! Worthy so holy, unpolluted, acceptable a Victim! Worthy the Lamb, who was slain to take away the sins of the world!"

Of this love of Christ for us, St. John Chrysostom wrote: "Let us love him as perfectly as we ought; for this is royalty and pleasure, this is enjoyment and glory, this is great beatitude and honour, which language cannot express, nor mind conceive."

June 2nd is also the Anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We offer to her Majesty our very best wishes for her health and happiness, and thank her for the great work she does for the nation. We assure her of our prayers for herself and her family.

During this month we also celebrate the great Feasts of Whitsunday (Pentecost) and Trinity Sunday, followed by Corpus Christi on Thursday the 23rd.

On Whitsunday we celebrate the outpouring of God the Holy Ghost, as Our Lord promised, upon the assembled Apostles and disciples, and the birthday of the Christian Church.

On Trinity Sunday we celebrate the amazing and wonderful revelation of God of Himself as the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity - the One and only true God. It is the full and final revelation of God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, One eternal God. The truth of the Holy Trinity is at the heart of the Christian Faith and opens up a better understanding of the very being of God as He has revealed Himself and His purpose for mankind and His entire creation.

The rest of the year until Advent, we Anglicans call the Sundays after Trinity; they are now also called Sundays in Ordinary time.

On Thursday 23rd June, we celebrate with Eucharist the Feast of Corpus Christi -Thanksgiving for Holy Communion in and through which the faithful believer is fed with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. True Anglicans, with the rest of Catholic Christendom, have always believed the teaching of Our Blessed Lord when He said 'This is my Body, This is my blood'.

When the male Priest, acting in the place of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of His Body, the Church, offers bread and wine upon the altar and repeats the words of Jesus, they become the Sacramental Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and He is truly present.

St. Cyril, c 827-869 AD, wrote “With all certainty or persuasion let us partake of it as of the Body and Blood of Christ; for under the type of bread His Body is given to thee, and under the type of wine His Blood is given to thee, that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, thou mayest be one body and blood with Him.”

Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, that we can meet Thee and have sweet Communion with Thee in the Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, and be fed with Thy Divine Life. Thanks be to Thee that in Thy Real Presence we can have fellowship and communion with all the Saints and our loved ones who are in Thee. Amen.

Fr. Richard Smith, who has been assisting us here in Presteigne since 1996 when he retired from the Parish of Eye, Suffolk, will be made a deacon in the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham on the 6th June at Oscott Priory; and a priest at St Chadd's Cathedral, Birmingham on Whitsunday. May God richly bless him in his continued ministry.

Our Lenten offering this year amounted to £200. Thank you. It will be divided between the TAC in India, and the Barnabas Fund for persecuted Christians. Thanks again to all who contributed.

Your Priest & Friend,

Fr. Brian.