

I

Resurrection

Our Christ-life is the life of the Risen Christ.

We know what the Incarnation means to us, that God the Son, by becoming man, caught up our human nature into his, made each one of us one with him. He took our human nature for his own and gave us his. He experienced everything that we do, excepting sin, and he even took upon himself the guilt and punishment of sin.

He made himself subject to our limitations: to discomfort, poverty, hunger and thirst, and pain. He knew fear, temptation, and failure. He suffered loneliness, betrayal, unrequited love, utter desolation of spirit, the sense of despair, and death. He suffered all these things, and all the secret, incommunicable things known to each individual, which can never be told; and he overcame them all.

He overcame even death, and came back to the world bringing it life and peace and joy.

Christ seems to have fallen in love with our suffering, so passionately has he laid hold of it and made it his. He is known to the whole world as the Man of Sorrows. Yet he came to give us life, life full of joy.

It was not with our suffering that Christ fell in love, but with us. He identified himself so wholly with our

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suffering, because our lives are necessarily made up of it. It is the inescapable consequence of sin. No one can escape it; everyone must somehow either make friends with suffering or be broken by it. No one can come close to another, let alone love him, without coming close to his suffering. Christ did far more; he wed himself to our suffering, he made Death his bride, and in the consummation of his love, he gave her his life. Christ has lived each of our lives, he has faced all our fears, suffered all our griefs, overcome all our temptations, labored in all our labors, loved in all our loves, died all our deaths.

He took our humanity, just as it is, with all its wretchedness and ugliness, and gave it back to us just as *his* humanity is, transfigured by the beauty of his living, filled full of his joy. He came back from the long journey through death, to give us his Risen Life to be *our* life, so that no matter what suffering we meet, we can meet it with the whole power of the love that has *overcome* the world. "I have said this to you, so that in me you may find peace. In the world, you will only find tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16: 33).

He has come back as spring comes back out of the ground, renewing the earth with life, to be a continual renewing of life in our hearts, that we may continually renew one another's life in his love, that we may be his Resurrection in the world. We are the resurrection, going on always, always giving back Christ's life to the world.

Resurrection

In every life there are many secret resurrections. In our sin, we are the tombs in which Christ lies dead, but at the first movement of sorrow for sin he rises from the dead in us, the life of the world is renewed by our sorrow, the soul that was in darkness radiates the morning light. In the moment that we are forgiven, the world is flooded with forgiveness.

No wonder that the angels rejoice when one sinner does penance more than over the ninety-nine who need no penance, for the resurrection in the soul of the sinner is complete. It is not just the poor sinner licking his wounds and limping on, crippled by the past; it is Christ risen, alive, whole.

All day long, all over the world there is resurrection. A puny infant is baptized; Christ lives again, strong in his new life. A convert is received into the Church, a little appalled and disappointed by the sense of emptiness in his own soul, after the long tension of his conversion; Christ comes back to the world. A boy murmurs the monotonous story of his sins in the cramped confession box, the words of absolution are spoken; Christ lives again in the heart of mankind. A forgotten old woman dies in the workhouse. To those who close the eyes and cover the quiet face nothing extraordinary has happened; in the eyes of the Eternal Father, Christ has risen again from the dead.

Every day thousands of people receive Holy Communion. Christ who has been sacrificed on the altar is laid in the tomb of their hearts. There is no place

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where he will not come: prisons, hospitals, schools, camps, ships at sea, cathedrals, and little tin churches; he comes to them all. He comes into the houses of the sick and the dying, regardless whether they are mansions or slums.

He comes to all kinds of people, from little children at First Communion, who bring him their first tender acts of love and reparation to be myrrh and aloes on his wounds, to old sinners who open their empty hearts to him hurriedly, at the last minute, just as Joseph of Arimathea's empty tomb was opened hurriedly, at the last minute before the Feast, to receive his crucified body.

Every day crowds of unknown people come to him, who feel as hard, as cold, as empty as the tomb. They come with the first light, before going to the day's work, and with the grey mind of early morning, hardly able to concentrate at all on the mystery which they themselves are part of: impelled only by the persistent will of love, not by any sweetness of consolation, and it seems to them as if nothing happens at all. But Christ's response to that dogged, devoted will of a multitude of insignificant men is his coming to life in them, his resurrection in their souls. In the eyes of the world they are without importance, but in fact, because of them and their unemotional Communions, when the world seems to be finished, given up to hatred and pride, secretly, in unimaginable humility, Love comes to life again. There is resurrection everywhere.