

Haec Dies (A244)  
(Stupend)

"This day was made by the Lord: we rejoice and are glad, alleluia"  
 The festival of Easter and Pentecost and the time between — what St Athanasius called "The Great Sunday" — is not simply a commemorative celebration, or even less a what-might-be-called "ideological" feast designed to stress a particular truth or dogma. No: the fulness of Easter, which includes Ascension Day & Pentecost, is the Paschal Mystery of Christ — which means, his passage through death & resurrection to a new life in the Spirit; an event which has changed the relationship of mankind to God, in which each of us is necessarily involved. It is a mystery of salvation — meaning that it affects us, and was done for us. In reality, Christ's going back to His Father and his sending the Spirit is the centre and origin of all Christian life. There are so many aspects and facets of Christian life as we know it today, 20 centuries after its beginning and with all the developments and ~~fresh~~ <sup>fresh</sup> insights into its meaning which mark it as a living, not fossilised reality, that it's good and necessary for all of us from time to time to take a fresh look at the central fact and event which gives meaning to it all. This is what we should do in Eastertide: this is what I suggest we pray about as we say our familiar prayers at midday. PRAYERS. Listen now to the <sup>Eastertide</sup> ~~new~~ hymn in honour of Our Lady, sung at the end of the daily Office, and which is recited by devout Catholics in place of the Angelus at midday, & 6 o'clock during this time.

Regina Coeli

The resurrection of Christ to a new life in the Spirit which He shares with us, is the central fact of faith. We believe Jesus is Lord — this is where Christian life starts. This was the centre and the emphasis of the Apostles preaching — once people accepted this fact, ~~thence~~ they believed in Christ, and realising the significance of who He was and what He did dedicated themselves to Him as their Master & Lord. They were further instructed in the meaning of Christian life and accepted into the community of the faithful. And this is what happens today too when a person comes to know Christ, NOT just to know about Him. But the Apostles, who were very simple, ordinary men, not intellectual geniuses or even sometimes particular bright. themselves had to learn the meaning of the events they were so much part of. It was not immediately clear to them on the first Easter Sunday evening, by whose time they knew Christ was no longer dead, that they were called on to do. Thomas, who wasn't with the rest of them, hiding in the locked room in their fear and confusion after the seeming collapse of all their lives on Good Friday afternoon, — Thomas ~~couldn't~~ <sup>couldn't</sup> grasp the fact, couldn't believe that Christ was alive, even when his friends told him the good news. He was very literal-minded about it — perhaps because he wanted to believe but was read at himself for not being with the others that evening and was hurt because he hadn't seen Christ again with his own eyes. But Christ indulged his

which, to Thomas' embarrassment, a little later: and at the same time gave the rest of us, who haven't seen Christ with our own eyes, an encouragement and blessing. Faith, belief and trust in Him ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> the important thing, not whether we've seen with material eyes. For his life is a life of the Spirit, which is to be shared by His disciples of all ages and countries. It wasn't until Pentecost that the Apostles really grasped all this: at Easter, they know He was alive and that this meant something momentous for them and for the world. That this fact was the good news they were to spread, this life the new life they were to share and develop, that Christ risen and alive was to be the centre of all their preaching and living — those things they needed the Holy Spirit to open their eyes to and give them the news and courage to bring to others beyond the small group of disciples Jesus had himself begun to form. Then they realised the kingdom they'd dreamt about was the power and reign of the risen Christ — that entry to it, membership with Him, was based on and gained by faith in Him as Lord of all men and of all creation.

We're no different today, in respect of this, from the Apostles. For us too, our faith in the risen Christ isn't simply the result of our own reasoning efforts: it's also the effect of the Holy Spirit sent into our world — a gift given to us, not only for our own enlightenment but to be the source of our Christian living and an inspiration — encouragement to draw others to the love of Christ.