

2.5.68
17.5.71 ✓

Haec Dies (dat) "This day was made by the Lord: we rejoice and are glad", Alleluia.

The late Mr. Ronald Knox (used, for many years, contribute to a meditation column in the London Sunday Times. A number of these pieces were later published in book-form under the titles "Stimuli" and "Lightning meditations". Perhaps there was a third volume too; but I haven't been able to come across a piece ^{of his I read once,} he wrote on the appearances of Christ after the resurrection, in which he made the point that the disappearances of Christ on those occasions were more fascinating, interesting surprises, with more to tell us about His risen life than His appearances had. Knox's idea struck me at the time (it was about 12¹⁵ yrs. ago) and I've always thought he had a good point. Since he wrote, there has been a great theological awakening in the Church as a whole, which has made many more people aware of other dimensions of the central mystery and event of Christianity, than the sterile using of the fact of Christ's resurrection as just a proof, though the most telling one, of the divinity of Christ. Knox was indicating a deeper understanding of Christ's risen life when he stressed the importance of his disappearances in the days after Easter. This is something to think about as we recite our daily prayer this midday.

PRAYERS.

Now, in music, another, polyphonic, setting of that familiar Easter phrase of R 117 "This day was made by the Lord"
Now, an old Italian meditation on the Resurrection of Christ.

The words, in the very stilted and unimaginative translation on this record sleeve, are: Q.

This is by the 16th C. English composer John Sheppard; & the British Museum MSS of the Breble parts have two comments written over it "the best song in England", and "a good song, an excellent good song"

The only people who actually saw Christ after His resurrection were His friends and disciples: and even they only saw Him occasionally, over a short period, and rather briefly. The only evidence other people, including His enemies, had, was the unexplained fact of the empty tomb and the winding-cloths used for His burial, still there in place, untouched & undisturbed. Like the taunts hurled at Him on the cross - "come down from that cross and we'll believe in You" - the evidence of something extraordinary and inexplicable didn't have any effect on people whose minds and hearts were already closed to Him. Christ wasn't trying to prove anything about Himself when He rose from death - if He were, surely He should have allowed Himself to be seen by the leaders & priests & people who hadn't been convinced by His previous teaching & miracles: if even that would have had any effect! But He wasn't playing gimmicks. He was alive all right, with a new kind of life, not limited by human mortal experience, not necessarily subject to the limited range of merely material vision, touch, hearing. He allowed His friends & disciples to actually see & touch Him because they needed the re-assurance to grasp fully the reality of what He'd done by dying & rising. Later, it was they who'd have to bring His message and the good news of the new life He'd won for all of us, to others who'd not seen or heard Him at all during His earthly life-time.

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Playway to Polyph. 2 RS 58

They still had to learn what their real mission was — it was only after they'd experienced the reality of His resurrection that they could even begin to understand this. Even just before His final departure, His final disappearance, the apostles were still unclear about their task — the coming of the Holy Spirit, in a tangible experience, would still be needed before they finally were able to break away from their own pet ideas of what their role was to be, and become what so unexpectedly, God wanted them to be. The extraordinary thing about the gospel accounts of Christ's appearances is their very ordinariness once the Apostles realized who the stranger was. There's no sense of strain, embarrassment ^{or} fear in those scenes. Instead, there's quietness, joy and peace — and when He disappears again, they seem to take it somehow for granted, and go on with their ordinary living. They've seen Him enough to know with absolute certainty that He is alive — that He isn't just like Lazarus, having to die again, but His life is different now and shared with them. His proper place is not in this time and space — limited world but beyond it. They know He can't remain with them in the way He lived with them before; but nevertheless is with them all the time, and will always be; to be met and recognized in their unity and in every condition and situation of man. Lord, grant us to see you — know it's you as surely as your Apostles did after Easter.