

30.5.68

Haec Dies
(Strophod) R.H.

"This day was made by the Lord: we rejoice and are glad, Alleluia"

Today is the last Midday prayer ^{this year} which I'll be opening by playing a setting of that ^{Latin} Easter antiphon, for the great 'day' of our Paschal celebration is coming to its completion, for this year, in the celebration of Pentecost in a few days' time. As I suggested before, these days of Ascension-time should be a period of special prayer and preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, with his gifts, to you and me as we celebrate next week the fulfillment of Christ's promise to us and the promise of Old Testament prophecy. Let's not forget that it is the Holy Spirit already working in us that makes us able to pray, to say 'Our Father'. The prayer we make privately now will help us and in fact is necessary if we are to enter as fully as possible into the joyful thanksgiving prayer and worship of the community of Christ's church next Sunday. So we pray today, as the Apostles did, to prepare our hearts and minds to be receptive to the new heart and the new spirit breathed into us in accordance with God's promise. Let us pray: Our Father

PRAYERS - and the Ps. the Church has associated with Ascension-time. Ps 46 - Q.

And for a prayer in music, a setting of Ps 46 by Philips

May is Mary's month; so as this is the final Thursday of May and tomorrow is the feast-day of her Queenship, which here in Hong Kong we celebrate as the feast of Our Lady Queen of China, it's appropriate to say something about her. Besides, Mary is noticeably present with the disciples of Christ as they wait in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit was also the proclamation of the Church Christ founded, as the sacrament of His continuing presence and redeeming work among mankind. And Mary is called the Mother of the Church, as she was the physical mother of Jesus. She has also always been taken as a figure or type of the Church, the servant of the Lord, in complete obedience to God's will & plans, absolutely devoted to Christ and joined with Him in the closest bonds. Rejoicing at Easter & Pentecost over what her Son has done for us, it is with her too we rejoice. Praying together for the out-pouring of God's Spirit, it is with her who knew Christ better than anyone else did or could, that we pray. Christ's church which has given birth to the life of Christ in each of us has as its natural & special patron and intercessor with the Father, Mary who gave birth to Christ at Bethlehem in order to give Him to all of us on Calvary. When, as He was suffering and dying for us on his cross, Jesus turned to look at his mother - St. John who remained faithful to Him to the end, and said: Mother, this is your Son; Son, this is your mother; He wasn't merely making arrangements for St John to look after ~~the mother~~ ^{Mary. He} was pointing out Mary's place in the Church, among

those who are his devoted followers, and giving her to us as mother of the divine life to be born in us through the Holy Spirit. She is very much in the centre of things in the life of the Church, right from the beginning — the fact that scripture says so little of her after the Resurrection is very understandable once you know what scripture is about. One thing it isn't is a system of belief or a code of ethics. Christianity is about life, the risen life of Christ which we share and which we've got to live. It's in this context Our Lady ^{finds her place,} a woman like half the human race, a woman whose total love & devotion goes to Jesus whose mother she is, and to those who have been made His brother by faith & grace. We can no more exclude her from our Christian life, our efforts to be united with Christ through the help of the Holy Spirit and Mary's intercession for us, than we can go to our Father without being made one with Christ. Our Lady is living, with the fullness of that divine life Her Son won for us & her too; how we're getting along, our troubles & difficulties, our sorrows & joys are all her interest, the interest of a mother. She has known the worst things that can happen to a Son she completely loves. If nothing else, it's she who shows us the full warmth and depth of the love of Christ; she's always there, with a mother's love & understanding, to help ^{us} and guide us and, if necessary, assure us of the reality, I might almost say, the human-ness of God's love for us in every situation and at all times.