

TAPE.

Ps 150 - Deus
(L.H.K.)

REGINA COELI

When the new calendar and further changes in the Mass-liturgy I mentioned recently come into effect, there will be more new prayers to be translated into English (and other languages). And this creates a problem - or, perhaps, aggravates one we already have. There's already been a lot of writing and discussion about adapting the liturgy of the Church to modern ways and needs - and hopefully, there'd be plenty more. What I say now is, of course, just one opinion; though I believe I have good, solid reasons behind it - but if you don't accept it, it would be worth while examining your point of view, and, if you feel strongly enough about it to commit your thoughts to paper, I'd be happy to put your opinion in a future programme. Briefly, in this business of producing a liturgy in ~~understandable~~ ^{understandable} modern language, it would seem that one important factor has been rather neglected, namely, what you might call the power of words. It's all very well having English texts that are fairly simple and intelligible; but the public nature of the prayers and scripture readings in the Mass does also require a certain quality of language for the occasion, and this (is) not at the expense of clarity, simplicity or sincerity. In this period of rapid change in the Church's liturgy, it's understandable that a priority has been given to making English (and other language) texts available; but we shd. not be content with flat banality or wordiness. Like, for instance, the late President Kennedy's inauguration speech, the quality of language in the proclamation of God's word at Mass and in the formal prayers of the Church shd. be such as to

move our hearts as we listen. If it doesn't, is there anything you and I can do about it? Well, I think there is something that can be done right now. ^{~ this is why I brought up} At the ^{of such} moment, the diocese of Hong Kong is preparing for a general convention later this year, and liturgy is going to be one of the important topics of discussion. While obviously the Chinese language question will be of far wider interest & importance, yet here is an opportunity for all of us to express our views and, hopefully, exercise some influence in making our forms of worship as meaningful and fruitful as, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Church herself intends they should be through the reforms begun by the recent Vatican Council and continuing with expert guidance since then. Reflection on this is relevant to our present Midday Prayer, for all our personal, private prayer should be both nourished by the ~~the~~ Christian community prayer of the liturgy and also a preparing for our participation in it. So, in the spirit of Eastertime let's listen now to an Easter hymn, "Sursum Iesus" - Jesus our Lord, being risen, said... Peace be with you, Amen.

MUSIC.

PRAYERS.

For this coming Sunday, the scripture readings follow the established pattern for Eastertime, with further passages from the Acts of the Apostles ^{and} the 1st Letter of St. Peter; and the Gospel, concerning the promised sending of the Holy Spirit, is from those Last Supper Discourse chapters of St John which are traditional paschal readings, because of their rich reflection and enlightenment on the full mystery of Christ's

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Pasover. But St. John does not make easy reading, and to understand him with any depth, one ought to read him carefully and prayerfully before listening to the extract appointed for Sunday — more especially now that, with a 3-yr. cycle of readings, it'll be much longer before this passage comes up again at Sunday Mass. It's point is that God our Father gives us the Holy Spirit to be with us always in these days since Christ's resurrection and return to His Father's side, no longer remaining visibly present in the world in the limitations of the mortal human existence He shared with us in a definite, circumscribed place and time. By the same token, Christ also indicates the personal reality of this ^{divine} Spirit we cannot know by human reasoning, much less by sense experience. His disciples saw Christ risen, alive after dying on the cross; He did not manifest Himself except to those who loved Him, believed in Him, accepted Him (even though, perhaps, with great difficulty, obscurity or anxiety). Nor is He known today except to those who love Him, have faith in Him, obey Him with the obedience He gave to His Father's will. To such people He manifests himself: He is present with them as He is with the Father, and as the Father and the Holy Spirit of God's love are in them. The mystery of the Trinity which is God, is inseparable from any real understanding of Christian life or what it means to be a Christian... to be, through Christ, involved in the very life and love of God. It's only in the light of what St. John reveals in His gospel that the other scripture passages you'll hear on Sunday, (about the giving of the Holy Spirit in the imposition of hands, and about the significance of baptism), can make any sense.