

Homily: 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Cycle C: 2022: Jer 17: 5-8; Ps 1; 1 Corth 15: 12-16, 20; Lk 16: 17, 20-26

*“The Truth of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus as the Bedrock of our Catholic Faith”*

1. **The fact of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ being raised from the dead in His body and soul is the foundation of our Catholic Faith.** Everything else we believe as Catholics must be seen in light of this awesome truth! Sadly today there are some people who claim to be Christian, but deny the reality of the Resurrection. For example, there are always these so called “scholars” put on the T.V. e.g., on the History Channel or the Discovery channel, etc., who come out and say, *“Well even if they found the bones of Jesus over in Palestine, I would still be a believer in Jesus’ ethical message.” Really?!* As a friend of mine said years ago, *“If they found the bones of Jesus, I would be down at the beach partying my life away, for you might as well eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die.”*
2. **How can this be, that people claim to be a Christian, yet don’t believe in the reality of the Resurrection?** Isn’t that an inherent contradiction? Well, yes it is, but it is a reality that they don’t see the contradiction of because they have lost the core of their Faith; and without the infused supernatural gift of Faith accepted in docility from God working in us - we are BLIND! And it is not something new: St. Paul was dealing with this in the community at Corinth - there were some people there who were denying the reality of the bodily Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and flowing from that, our own bodily Resurrection as human beings when Jesus returns in His Second Coming in Glory. As St. Paul says in that context, *“if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, your faith is in **vain**; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only have we hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.”* And He goes on to say later in this same letter, ***“If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!*** And he warns them and us what is causing this doubt in their hearts about the Resurrection, *“Bad company corrupts good morals. Return to reason, as you ought, and stop sinning. Some of you are quite ignorant of God; I say it to your shame.”* Would St. Paul say the same thing to

some of us? We need to avoid things and people that harm our faith - **avoid the occasions of sin** (*the people, places, and things that entice us into sinning*); that really is often a great part of the battle of living the Catholic life in our time!

3. **Yet Christ has been raised from the dead.** He is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep in death. You and I will one day die, and our souls will go before God and be judged and go to either Heaven, Hell or Purgatory (**note:** *if we die before Jesus comes again, for when He comes again in glory, Purgatory will then come to an end and the souls there will all go to Heaven*). However, when Jesus comes again in glory all of us will receive our bodies back since as human beings we are both body and soul in our being, not simply spiritual like the angels or physical like the animals. That is an amazing thing to ponder: we will have our bodies in Heaven, or terrifyingly in Hell! How does this come about? We do not know all the details scientifically, but **the reality is if God the Father can raise His Son Jesus from the dead in His human body, He can do the same for us!** We need to trust Him and have faith. As the prophet Jeremiah tells us today, *“Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in the flesh, whose heart turns away from the Lord. He is like a barren bush in the desert.”* Could he be talking about people who try to figure EVERYTHING out with their limited human minds and reason and in our day who reject the Faith as “unscientific” and “unverifiable”, e.g. our faith in the bodily Resurrection of Jesus and of each human being some day in the future? Jeremiah goes on to say, in contrast *“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes; its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.* The gift of our Catholic Faith, and our belief in the bodily Resurrection, will carry us through ANYTHING in this life, as it is truly **the key** to entering into union with our Lord Jesus who leads us to the Father, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in company with our Lady and the good angels and saints in Heaven, as well as the good people here on earth. As the psalmist says today, *“Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.”* God bless you.