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A Reading on the Gospel by St Thomas More ¹

Let us deeply consider the love of our Savior Christ who so loved his own unto the end that for their sakes he willingly suffered that painful end, and therein declared the highest degree of love that can be. For, as he himself says: *A greater love no one has than to give his life for his friends*. This is indeed the greatest love that ever anyone had. But yet had our Savior a greater love, for he gave his life for both friend and foe.

But what a difference is there now, between this faithful love of his and other kinds of false and fickle love found in this wretched world. The flatterer pretends to love you because he dines well with you. But now if adversity so diminishes your possessions that you find your table not laid, then – farewell, adieu – your brother flatterer is gone and gets himself to some other table. And he might even turn into your enemy and cruelly speak evil of you.

Who can in adversity be sure of many of his many friends when our Savior himself was, at his capture, left alone and forsaken by his? When you go forth, who will go with you? If you were a king

would not all your realm send you on your way alone and then forget you? Will not your own family let you depart a naked, feeble soul, you know not whither?

Let us all in time, then, learn to love as we should, God above all things, and all other things for him. And whatsoever love be not referred to that end, namely, to the good pleasure of God, is a very vain and unfaithful love. And whatsoever love we bear to any creature whereby we love God the less, that love is a loathsome love and hinders us from heaven. Love no child of yours so tenderly but that you could be content to sacrifice it to God, as Abraham was ready with Isaac, if God so commanded you. And since God will not do so, offer your child in another way to God's service. For whatever we love that make us break God's commandment, we love better than God, and that is a love deadly and damnable. Now, since our Lord has so loved us, for our salvation, let us diligently call for his grace that in return for his great love we be found not ungrateful.

¹Journey with the Fathers – Year B – New City Press – 1999 – pg 58

The Experience of Faith by Hans Urs von Balthasar¹

The analogy between the pre-Easter and the post Easter testimony (comparable to the analogy between testimony in the Old and the New Testament) signifies the decisive step forward: the leaving behind of the old, which had served as basis, in order to become established in the new. Paul is the eyewitness of this step forward, since he not only had to defend his eyewitness arduously in itself, but his eyewitness in this matter against the privileges of the original Apostles. Whoever disregards the element of analogy in the Apostles' witness, will hold unswervingly to the testimony of the other Apostles and will with them consider Paul's credentials as an eyewitness to be secondary, if not altogether doubtful. But his legitimacy stands under the protection of Scriptural inspiration and thus remains unassailable. This is of the highest theological interest. Paul's witness to the Resurrection dispenses with the 'analogy' between witness to Christ's earthly existence and witness to the Resurrection; he is a witness only to Jesus' Resurrection. For Paul, the identity of the risen Christ with the Jesus who suffered and died lies in the vitality exhibited by the Kyrios. Because he is the new man, he was also the old. If this holds for Paul and if it is to this that he witnesses, the same does not necessarily apply to the others. For Paul there is no other legitimation than that of his own turning from the Old to the New Covenant and to the new man, his *conversio morum*, the fact that in all things he shows himself to be a servant of God, the fact that his existence has been so transformed that it has become an incontestable mirroring of the image of Christ. Paul proves himself to be one who has seen essentially by letting himself be seen and by being, in fact, seen. He gives himself wholly over to seeing, hearing, and touching: by the grace of God, in him a Christian has been formed who is not a ghost, but who has flesh and bones. Paul cuts right through the analogy that runs across the testimony of Peter and others, and this cannot be his work, since he himself is the work of the grace of the Risen One.

Paul straddles the boundary between the apostolic and the ecclesial era. He fights for his inclusion in the apostolic era, and the Lord himself gives the warrant for this inclusion; and yet his experience of Christ bears essential features of the ecclesial era, namely, that of private revelation and its confirmation by personal sanctity. He shares this transitional character with the whole period of the Acts of the Apostles: this is the period of archetypal Church history. This is certainly so, on the one hand, because this is the span of time in which Christ's original

¹The Glory of the Lord. Vol. I Seeing the Form. Hans Urs von Balthasar, Ignatius Press, 1982, pp. 347-348.

eyewitnesses lived. And yet Paul falls outside these limits, while still dominating in a central way the events in the Acts of the Apostles. For, on the other hand, this period of history is more than just the time-span in which the original eyewitnesses lived; it is the privileged space in which the Holy Spirit became visible, audible, and palpable: it is the expansion of the explosion that occurred on Pentecost.

EST40

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**Christ as A Quickening Spirit in His Resurrection.
From a Sermon by Bl. John Henry Newman.²**

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." (Lk.24:5-6). Such is the triumphant question with which the Holy Angels put to flight the sadness of the women on the morning of Christ's resurrection. These were deeds and words spoken hundreds of years ago; so long ago, that in the world's thought they are as if they had never been; yet they hold good to this day. Christ is to us now, just what He was in all His glorious attributes on the morning of the Resurrection; and we are blessed in knowing it, even more than the women to whom the Angels spoke, according to His own assurance, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

First, then, let us observe how Christ's resurrection harmonizes with the history of his birth. David foretold that His "soul should not be left in hell", neither should "the Holy One see corruption." And with a reference to this prophecy, St. Peter says that it "was not possible that He should be held by death;" as if there were some hidden inherent vigor in Him, which secured His humanity from dissolution. The greatest infliction of pain and violence could only destroy its powers for a time; but nothing could make it decay. "You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption;" so says the Scripture, and elsewhere calls Him the "Holy child Jesus." These expressions carry our minds back to the angels' announcement of His birth, in which His incorruptible and immortal nature is implied. "That Holy One" which was born of Mary was "the Son", not of man but "of God." Others have all been born in sin, "after Adam's own likeness, in his image," and, being born in sin, they are heirs to corruption. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death," and all its consequences, "by sin." Not one human being comes into existence without God's discerning evidences of sin attending that birth. But when the Word of Life was manifested in our flesh, the Holy Spirit displayed that creative hand by which, in the beginning, Eve was formed; and the Holy Child, thus conceived by the power of the Most High, was immortal even in His mortal nature, clear from all infection of the forbidden fruit, to the extent of being sinless and incorruptible. Therefore, though He was liable to death, "it was impossible that He should be **held**" by it. Death might overpower, but it could not keep possession; "it had no dominion over Him." He was, in the words of the text, "the **Living** among the dead."

² Parochial and Plain Sermons. John Henry Newman. Ignatius Press. San Francisco. 1987.p.314.

And hence His rising from the dead may be said to have shown His divine origin. He was "**declared** to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness;" that is, His essential Godhead, "by the resurrection of the dead." He had been condemned as a blasphemer by the Jewish rulers, "because He made Himself the Son of God;" and He was brought to the death of the Cross, not only as a punishment, but as a practical refutation of His claim. He was challenged by His enemies on this score: "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Thus His crucifixion was as though a trial, a new experiment on the part of Satan, who had before tempted Him, whether he was like other people, or the Son of God. He was obedient unto death, fulfilling the law of that disinherited nature which He had assumed; and in order, by undergoing it, to atone for our sins. But there the triumph of His enemies, so to say, ended, -- ended with what was necessary for our redemption. He said, "It is finished;" for His humiliation was at its lowest depth when He expired. Immediately various signs showed that the real victory was with Him. First, the earthquake and other wonders in heaven and earth. These were even enough to justify His claim in the judgment of the pagan centurian, who at once said, "Truly this **was** the Son of God." Then followed His descent into hell, and triumph in the unseen world, whatever that was. Lastly, that glorious deed of power on the third morning which we now commemorate. The dead arose. The grave could not detain Him who "had life in Himself." He rose as a person awakes in the morning, when sleep flies from one as a matter of course. Corruption had no power over that Sacred Body, the fruit of a miraculous conception. The bonds of death were broken as "green branches," witnessing by their feebleness that He was the Son of God.

The Resurrection of Christ as Our Title to Life. From a Sermon by Bl. John Henry Newman.³

Jesus Christ says, "As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given also to the Son to have life in Himself;" and afterwards He says, "Because I live, you also shall live." It would seem then, that as Adam is the author of death to the whole human race, so is Christ the origin of immortality. When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, it was as a poison spreading through his whole nature, soul and body, and from there through every one of his descendants. We are told expressly "in Adam **all** die." We are born heirs to that infection of nature which followed upon his fall. But we are also told, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and the same law of God's providence is maintained in both cases. Adam spreads poison; Christ diffuses life eternal. Christ communicates life to us, one by one, by means of that holy and incorrupt nature which He assumed for our redemption. Therefore St. Paul says that "the last Adam was made" not merely "a living soul," but "a **quickening**" or life-giving "Spirit", as being "the Lord from heaven." Let us not doubt, though we do not sensibly approach Him, that He can still give us the virtue of His purity and incorruption, as He has promised, and in a more heavenly and spiritual manner than "in the days of His flesh;" in a way which does not remove merely the ailments of the body, but sows the seed of eternal life in body and soul. Let us not deny Him the glory of His life-giving holiness, that quickening grace which is the renovation of our whole race, a spirit quick and powerful and piercing, so as to leaven the whole mass of human corruption and make it live. He is the first-fruits of the Resurrection: we follow Him each in our own order, as we are hallowed by His inward presence. And in this sense, among others, Christ, in the Scripture phrase, is "formed in us;" that is, communication is made to us of His new nature, which sanctifies the soul, and makes the body immortal.

Such then is our risen Savior in Himself and towards us: -- conceived by the Holy Spirit; holy from the womb; dying, but abhorring corruption; rising again the third day by His own inherent life; exalted as the Son of God and Son of man, to raise us after Him; and filling us incomprehensibly with His immortal nature, till we become like Him; filling us with a spiritual life which may expel the poison of the tree of knowledge and restore us to God. How wonderful a work of grace! Strange it was that Adam should be

³ Parochial and Plain Sermons. John Henry Newman. Ignatius Press. San Francisco. 1987. p.316.

our death, but stranger still and very gracious, that God Himself should be our life, by means of that human tabernacle which He has taken on Himself.

O blessed day of the Resurrection, which from of old has been called the Queen of Festivals, and raised among Christians an anxious diligence duly to honor it! Blessed day, once only passed in sorrow, when the Lord actually rose, and the disciples believed not; but ever since a day of joy to the faith and love of the Church! In ancient times, Christians all over the world began it with a morning salutation. Each person said to their neighbor, "Christ is risen;" and the neighbor answered, "Christ is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." Even to Simon, the coward disciple who three times denied Him, Christ is risen; even to us, who long ago vowed to obey Him, and have yet so often denied Him before others, so often taken part with sin, and followed the world, when Christ called us another way. "Christ is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

05SN1001

05/10/18

The Life of Blessed Damien De Veuster - Edited by Joseph Tylenda, SJ ¹

Damien was born on January 3, 1840 in the small village of Tremeloo about six miles from Louvain, Belgium. He was the seventh of eight children. At his baptism he was named Joseph. The De Veuster family lived on a small farm and it was maintained by the labors of the father and the children. Joseph's education was limited to the elementary level and when he reached the age of thirteen, his days were spent working on the farm. When he was eighteen his father sent him to supplement his education by learning to manage the business end of the farming enterprise. The farming, carpentry and other trades he learned in Tremeloo all came in handy on the island of Molokai.

His brother Auguste, nearly three years older, had entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Louvain. Joseph spoke to his brother about his own desire for following a religious vocation. He intimated that he was drawn to the Trappist manner of life. However his brother suggested that he enter the same congregation as he had done. On his nineteenth birthday he and his father paid a visit to the monastery of the Sacred Heart Fathers in Louvain. Joseph decided to remain there on the spot.

Since his education was somewhat deficient, he was accepted for the brotherhood rather than the priesthood. Here he was given the name of Damien. Still desiring the priesthood, Damien asked his brother to teach him Latin. Damien did so well that the superior reconsidered his decision and now included him among the students for the priesthood.

Word spread among the students at Louvain that the missions in the Sandwich Islands, today's Hawaiian Islands, had urgent need of missionaries. Both brothers volunteered and were accepted. Damien was ordained priest in Honolulu and was sent to various parishes on the island.

An outbreak of leprosy had struck the islands and the government enforced the segregation of those afflicted to the newly established Kalawao Settlement, located on the northern side of the island of Molokai. Catholics were a minority and were habitually without ministrations of a priest. The Bishop informed his priests of this fact, but felt that he could not order any to go there. Fr Damien volunteered to go. He arrived on a boat, along with fifty lepers, on May 10, 1873. When Damien toured his new parish, he found it very depressing. The faces he saw were disfigured by running ulcerated sores; hands were without fingers and feet without toes. Those greeting him were half-naked and the meager clothing they wore were rags, dirty and foul smelling. About him he found no houses but only crumbling thatched huts that served as miserable shelters for the lepers. He himself was without a house, but he found a pandanus tree near the church of St.

Philomena, and there he spent his nights until he built a shack that was to become his residence.

The food supply was inadequate for the six hundred lepers, and their attempts at farming were unsuccessful due to their condition. The water supply was located at such a distance from the huts that most were physically unable to carry water to their hovels and hence rarely washed and had to live in huts that were defiled and polluted. -over

Fr Damien quickly came to realize that even though he had come to care for the spiritual

needs of the 200 Catholics in the settlement, he could not restrict his ministry to them alone, but would have to use all his talents to make the lepers last months on earth somewhat humane. He traveled to Honolulu to seek supplies for the colony: more food for his people, lumber and tools for construction, and pipes to better the sanitation system. His early training in farming proved a great asset to him. With the lumber he and the Ahealthy@ lepers began to transform the miserable huts into clean habitable cottages. With the pipes he brought the water supply into the center of the colony where everyone could get water for all their needs. He also learned how to clean and bandage sores, apply ointments and prescribe pills. To the lepers of Molokai Fr Damien was priest and doctor, carpenter and plumber, but above all he was the tangible evidence of God=s love among them.

By ministering to their diseased bodies, Fr Damien was able to touch their souls. Within two months of his coming he had 2/3 of the six hundred inhabitants under his spiritual care; about half of these were undergoing instruction prior to baptism. Among his Catholic faithful he formed a group of altar boys and a choir. Death was a common experience on the island and rather than leaving the bodies dumped on the edge of the settlement as had been the custom, Fr Damien marked off a cemetery and enclosed it with a white picket fence. At the end of his first eighteen months he had celebrated over 200 funerals.

In 1881 Damien first began to feel pain in his feet and by 1885 it was clear that the disease was taking over his body. On March 19, 1889 Fr Damien celebrated the silver anniversary of his arrival at Honolulu, but a few days later he was confined to his bed and began to prepare himself for death. He said: AThe good Lord is calling me to celebrate Easter with Him@. On Monday of Holy Week, April 15, 1889, the leper priest died with a smile on his lips. He was buried under the same pandanus tree that gave him shelter when he first came to Kalawao sixteen years before. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II.

1Portraits in American Sanctity - edited by Joseph N. Tylanda, SJ - Franciscan Herald Press- Chicago - 1982

A reading from a letter of St. Bernard to Pope Eugenius, on behalf of Peter the Venerable. 1

It would be silly for me to write you on behalf of the Lord Abbot of Cluny, to act as if I wanted to befriend a man whom the entire world befriends. But although he does not need me to write on his behalf, I am nevertheless doing so in order to satisfy my affection for him, for this purpose alone and no other. Although I cannot accompany him in body I shall be with him in spirit on his pilgrimage to Rome. Nothing can separate us, not the height of the Alps, nor the cold of the snows, nor the long distance of the journey. And I am present to him now, stretching out my hand to him in this letter. He cannot go anywhere without me because I am so much in his debt for the favor of his friendship. But his favor itself acquits me of the debt, for what was a duty has become a pleasure.

Honor this man as an honorable member of Christ=s body. He is a vessel fit for all honorable employment, a vessel full of grace and truth, full of all manner of good things. Send him back with joy to rejoice the hearts of many by his return. Show him great favor, so that when he returns we may all receive of his fullness. He should, of course, find no difficulty in obtaining from you anything he asks for in the name of the Lord Jesus. For, if you do not know it, he it is that holds out his hands to the poor of our Order; he it is that freely and frequently, as far as he may without offending his own people, supports our brethren from the possessions of his monastery.

But let me explain why I say >in the name of the Lord Jesus.= It is because I fear and suspect he may ask to be released from the rule of his monastery; and no one who knows him would consider this a petition made in the name of Jesus. I am very much mistaken if he is not more self-effacing than usual, if he has not become more perfect since he last saw you, although it is well known that almost from the first instant of assuming office he reformed his Order in many ways, in the matter, for instance, of fasting, silence, and costly and curious clothing.

On Loving Christ. From an Easter Sermon of St. Augustine⁴

Appearing to his disciples after the Resurrection, Our Lord put a question to the Apostle Peter, prompting him who had denied him three times out of fear to make a threefold profession of his love. Christ rose bodily from the dead, Peter was raised spiritually. Christ our Lord rose from the dead, and by his love raised Peter. What advantage was it to Christ to be loved by Peter? When Christ loves you, you are the gainer, not Christ. And when you love Christ, again you stand to gain, not Christ. Wishing to teach all peoples how they can prove their love for him, Christ our Lord made it plain that this is best proved by their concern for his sheep. "Do you love me" Lord, you know that I love you. Feed my sheep." This happened not once, but a second and third time. Our Lord asked only, "Do you love me?" He received no other answer than, "You know that I love you." He gave no other charge to Peter than "Feed my sheep". If we love one another then we also love Christ. For Christ, God from all eternity, was born of a human in the course of time. As human born of human He appeared as human to humankind. As God in the form of human He worked many miracles. As human He suffered many wrongs at the hands of humans. As God in the form of human He arose from the dead. As human among humans He tarried on earth forty days. As God in the form of human He ascended into heaven before their eyes, and now is seated at the right hand of the Father. All this we fully believe, although we do not see it. Neither do we see Christ whom we are commanded to love, and yet each one of us cries out out avowal: I love Christ! "If you do not love your brother or sister whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see?" In loving the sheep we prove that we love the Shepherd, for the sheep are in truth the very members of the Shepherd. In order that the sheep might be his members, He deigned to become the Lamb of God. In order that the sheep might be his members, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." In order that the sheep might be his members, it was said of him, "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world." But what tremendous strength there is in this Lamb. Would you

⁴ Selected Easter Sermons of Saint Augustine. Commentary by Philip T. Weller. B. Herder Book Co. St. Louis, MO. 1959. p. 169.

like to know when strength was made manifest in this Lamb? Well, the Lamb was crucified and the lion was overcome. Consider and reflect with what power the world is ruled by Christ our Lord who vanquished the devil by his death. - over -

Let us, then, give him our love, and let nothing be dearer to us than He. Or do you think that our Lord is not questioning us? Do you imagine that Peter alone deserved to be questioned, and not ourselves? Whenever this lesson is read, the heart of each and every Christian is being scrutinized. Therefore, whenever you hear the Lord saying, "Peter, do you love me?" visualize a mirror and examine your own reflection. For what else was Peter but a symbol of the Church? Hence when the Lord questioned Peter, He was questioning us.

In temptations, in toil, in weariness, in troubles, in miseries, in sorrows, may the love of Christ which we love in you, the love of Christ which you also love in us, lead us to that place where toil will be no more; nor misery, nor sighs, nor moans, nor vexation, where there will be neither birth nor death, where no one need dread the divine wrath, but find all delight in gazing upon the face of the Almighty.