

Homily 04/04/2010 HE IS RISEN AS HE SAID

Scientists tell us that between 13 and 14 billion years ago there was the big bang that begins all of what we know of the universe including our presence in it. From the perspective of faith we have no problem with such a theory because however everything got under way we believe that it all emanated from the hand of a loving God. But none of us was there at the beginning. What do you think was going on in the mind of God? Why did God choose to create? Why did God choose to go out of himself? Choose to create the spiritual world? Choose to create the material world? And most of all why would God create and bestow freedom—on his angels and on us?

We forget a great deal as human beings. We forget the great lessons revealed in the Book of Genesis, that God created the material world in his own time and in his own way, in phases. And at the end of each phase God looked at what he had created and indeed it was very good. All that God does is good. We forget that Genesis tells us that in the beginning there was no death. There was only life and access to the tree of life in God's own earthly garden. No death. Death only came afterwards—after the misuse of freedom after our disobedience, after our lack of trust in God where we reached out and took what had not been given. In that moment we human beings became a people of Takers rather than Receivers. In that moment where we sundered the bond of friendship with our God, that is when death came—cold, final, inexorable, relentless death. More certain than taxes.

We forget what that world was like because we live in a world that has been redeemed. We forget how dark it was, how animalistic, how cruel, how violent, how hateful that world was. How hopeless. How dark. We forget all that. But God did not ever forget. God remembered that we were lost without him. God remembered that we could not fix ourselves. God remembered what he had had in mind in that original creation—all the good, all the creativity, all the ingenuity that would come from the cooperation with grace. God remembered his covenant with our first parents. And God decided that He would never give up on the creation that he had begun but which had been so badly marred by sin. He would not give up one aspect of his creation, not spiritual nor material. God would not abandon what He had begun. God would remain faithful.

God remembered that he loved the world he had made and because he loved that world so he sent his only begotten Son to be our Savior, to rescue us and redeem us from sin and death. And this Son would create us anew, re-form us, trans-form us into a new creation. And this new creation would

also be made in God's image and likeness, in the likeness of his Son whom we call Jesus of Nazareth. This was God's Son who became one of us, even taking on our alienation, our estrangement and broken heartedness. Even taking on death, even death on a cross.

And after all the good that he did, the healings he performed, the sins he forgave, the storms he stilled, the multitudes that he fed, the dead that he raised, after all that there were still some who were threatened by him, afraid of him. They lashed out at him and brought him down—cruelly. And then they buried him—quickly. They even sealed the grave and set a guard to watch over it. They were still afraid. Of a dead man? Why that?

Because he was more than a dead man. He was God's Son in our flesh. And the Father remembered and would not let his Son undergo corruption or remain in that tomb. God raised him from the dead—and with him, all those who would put their faith in him even those who had died before him. And the sealed tomb and the armed guard could not stop the resurrection, or those who would tell of the resurrection. Jesus burst forth from that tomb nevermore to die. And because he remembers us he does not leave us in our tombs either. We shall live again he tells us. There is another life, a better life, a life of justice. There is the kingdom of God which is all around us if only we see with the eyes of Jesus, the eyes of faith. Our bodies too shall be raised, glorified, transformed. Why? Because that is what the empty tomb means. We move beyond the corruption of this world into a life that can never end nor undergo corruption. That tomb is still empty. He is not there! He is here! To this I testify. He is here as really as he was there two thousand years ago. And that is why you are here this morning. Because he is here. Do not forget. Do not forget! Remember! Remember me! Do this in memory of Me! Happy Easter!