

# + EASTER SUNDAY

April 9, 2023

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Philip Anderson, Abbot of Clear Creek Abbey

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Haec dies quam fecit Dominus: exsultemus et laetemur in ea, alleluia. - This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein, alleluia.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
My very dear sons,

*Haec Dies. This is the day.* These words, taken from Psalm 117, figure throughout the Easter liturgy. This morning the monks were awakened by the same biblical verse, as the brother assigned to rouse them from slumber, going from cell to cell and knocking upon each door, repeated the words *Haec dies, This is the day...*, which is thus employed to wake us up only on Easter Sunday and on the day of a monk's profession.

Truly *this is the day*, because on Easter something immensely important happens, something far outside the normal course of human events. Creation is renewed, the world is saved, and a whole *new* world is inaugurated, when Christ, who was put to death on Good Friday, rises from the dead. This is why some early Christians referred to it as the "eighth day," that is to say the first day of a new and mystical week, following the seventh day or Sabbath, when God rested from His work of creation in the beginning. The resurrection of the Messiah brings about a new economy of time, inaugurating a new week in the history of the world, placing us again in Paradise, from which the fault of our first parents had banished us.

*This is the day.* Day follows night. Before Christ's Passion and Resurrection, the darkness of sin reigned sovereign over the earth. Spiritual darkness weighed upon the life of man. This became even more painfully felt when the ancient Law, the Law of Moses, pointed out the moral failings of mankind and revealed the offence. "Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night showeth knowledge" (Psalm 18). At Easter, as when the Hebrews once upon a time crossed the Red Sea, there is a passage from the old to the new, as Christ's Pasch illumines and restores the spiritual fabric of the universe. The darkness of winter is over; spring has arrived. It is a new year in the Hebrew calendar, when the sunlight hours of the day begin to have the upper hand over the hours of night. In spiritual terms, Man is reborn to wonder and delight in the Truth. The darkness of spiritual death, that is to say sin, is vanquished. "This is the day."

*The day which the Lord hath made...* We did not make this new beginning. Despite our many human achievements, this essential victory belongs to the Lord. At various times and places Man has sought to glory in his own accomplishments. He has seen himself as the measure of all things, the crown of creation, having only himself to thank for it all. But, in fact, before this day, we were utterly lost. Some men knew it; some did not; but the fact was there. It was God, who, in His infinite Mercy, deigned to save us from the disaster, the shipwreck of humanity. *He* made

this day. The Father made this day. The Holy Spirit made this day. The Son, because of His particular mission on earth as Word Incarnate, especially made this day.

*This is the day...let us be glad and rejoice therein.* This gladness and joy of the day of the Resurrection, of the day of eternity, is not optional. It is a solemn duty. Dom Gueranger, who founded the Solesmes Congregation to which we belong, used to say that his monks should be “Alleluia from head to toe.” Dom Paul Delatte went as far as to say that undue “sadness...has something blasphemous about it...[whereas] joy is the blossoming of our soul in purity, in the light of God” (quoted in *The Spirit of Solesmes*, pg. 145).

This joy has been translated over the centuries into the various art forms and soaring architecture of the Christian world. It has expressed itself especially in music, that of the angelic choirs and that of the Church on earth. Today’s Gradual, based on the same words of Psalm 117 we have been meditating upon, is truly one of the great masterpieces of Gregorian chant, and the theme has found a magnificent echo in the grandeur of sacred polyphonic music.

The joy of this day is also a nuptial joy, the joy of the wedding banquet of the Lamb, who was slain, but who lives and rejoices forever with His bride, the Church. “Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Apoc. 19:9). “Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see king Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of this espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart” (Cant. 3:11).

In the end, we ourselves must *be* this “new day,” *Haec dies*, clothed with light like the catechumens who are baptized on this day, dressed in white. The conferral of Holy Baptism has always been an integral part of the liturgy of Easter. *Haec dies, this day*, is spiritually the day of our Baptism, upon whichever day of the year we happened to be baptized. What a grace to be baptized at Easter, as was the almost universal practice in the early Church. It is up to us to live as children of light, taking care of the whiteness of our baptismal robe.

I would like to end with these words of the Holy Father, pronounced at the Easter Vigil a number of years ago, soon after his election.

Nothing remains as it was before, not only in the lives of those women, but also in our own lives and in the history of mankind. Jesus is not dead, he has risen, he is *alive*! He does not simply return to life; rather, he is life itself, because he is the Son of God, the living God (cf. *Num* 14:21-28; *Deut* 5:26; *Josh* 3:10). Jesus no longer belongs to the past, but lives in the present and is projected towards the future; Jesus is the everlasting “today” of God. This is how the newness of God appears to the women, the disciples and all of us: as victory over sin, evil and death, over everything that crushes life and makes it seem less human. (Easter Vigil, March 30, 2013)

*Regina Coeli Laetare.* Amen. Alleluia.