



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Easter 2019

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

In Romania, they wisely abandon banal and ordinary greetings like ‘hello’ or ‘good morning’ in these 50 days of Easter until Pentecost. ‘Alright’ is exchanged for “Hristos a înviat!” ‘Christ is Risen!’, and the other person replies “Adevărat a înviat!” ‘He is Risen indeed!’.

You go in to the shop, or meet someone in the street, or see colleagues at their desk on a Monday morning and that’s what you say and that’s how everyone responds.

The lovely custom clearly shows these events to which we have come now do not belong in Church on a Sunday morning, they don’t belong to our club or in particular corner of our lives. They have erupted from the tomb of the risen God-man and are flooding the cosmos, changing *everything forever*.

They flow from this altar week by week, through us, out into the world. Every aspect of our lives is being invited to be a part of this *new* thing God has done – how on earth could our greeting of one another NOT reflect that!?

We can’t go from here, we cannot leave any Eucharistic encounter with the Risen Jesus, and be fooled into thinking things are as they were – they are not. By His grace throughout our lives, Mass by Mass, every thought word and deed, every prayer and gift and love, *every aspect of our lives* will belong more and more to the life of heaven. This is the Resurrection unfolding.

I do not mean for this to be a guilt-trip. This is not a scolding. This is not a cause to screw-up our strength to become ‘nicer people’. If we rely on our own

strength we will fail. If we rely on rules we will become pharisees. If we rely upon repression we will truly be lost. How, then, must we play our part in the unfolding of Christ's Resurrection in our little corner of the cosmos?

This bursting forth of power and grace from the empty tomb and from this altar simply requires us to *give in*. Not to shackle or wrangle ourselves, but simply to give in and **keep our eyes fixed on Jesus**. We must begin to do every aspect of our lives with our gaze fixed on Him. How might we clean the house, travel to work, be at our desk, have our lunch, talk to our family, interact with strangers in such a way that our gaze is on Jesus as we do? We (and our work or getting the tube or whatever) is actually a subplot to our primary focus on the Risen One. Then, gradually, everything will fall into place. First our gaze, then our feet and hands and lips and mind and heart, our relationships and work and leisure time and, well, everything. By keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus we discover that we have become truly *alive*, in Him. A transfigured life, to match a universe transfigured by Jesus' Resurrection. Anything else is simply less than fully *real*.

It's not magic, and it takes a lifetime. A lifetime of returning here to this encounter [the Eucharist] and a lifetime of living *out* the Eucharist.

Even when we are blinded or plunged into darkness. Keeping our gaze on Him.

By His grace, every greeting of a fellow human being, every thought, word and deed, every prayer and gift and love, every tiny aspect of our lives will belong more and more to our true selves and our true homeland. If only we would keep our eyes fixed on Him and let that shape and define the rest of us.

We are afraid, of course; we are afraid of such love. But if we would only look on Him, we might summon the courage to try one day at a time, in all things, to simply look at Him. What might it mean for you this Eastertide, this year, to set your gaze on Jesus as you go about *every* part of your life, in this way?

Brothers and Sisters, every corner of the cosmos is being invited to share in the Resurrection life. As part of this *we* are being made into our *true* selves. We just need to fix our eyes on the Risen Jesus and let that define the rest. In the Resurrection God has done – is doing – a *new* thing... Let's join the party. 'Hristos a înviat'. Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!