
Entering the Joy of the Lord

- This may be the oldest bit of Christian hymnody we have:

Wake up, O sleeper

Wake from the dead

And Christ will shine upon you. (Eph. 5:14).

- The carpenter from Nazareth, the young wandering rabbi, the great gatherer of friends, had gone into everything dark, destructive, and broken in our humanity. He had “harrowed Hell.” And then He turned out to be infinitely more than any of his friends or enemies had imagined.

- In His humanness, He triumphed over death. He had embraced everything human without ever acting unfaithful to His Father, to Himself, or to His friends. He had lived His life in uprightness and in joy. Now, He is confirmed eternally in His own joy—to be with the children of humankind.

- Jesus now lives in a human condition without any precedent. He lives without flaw, defect, or default, unthreatened by any infidelity or by any kind of ending. He lives this condition for others, for all other human beings. He has the tremendous happiness of sharing this new human condition with each one of us. He’s like an unimaginably rich man who spends all his time giving and giving, helping and helping. Only, Jesus Christ is God and will spend forever giving and helping.

- This is the Jesus Christ who lives now. If you do not come to know Him both full of joy and exuberantly sharing His happiness, then you will not really know Him at all. You have asked in past days to know Jesus and to love Him and to follow where He goes. It is into fullness of life and complete human joy that He goes! If you do not follow Him into His joy, you will ultimately find it hard to believe that you are following Him at all.

- As you contemplate Jesus Christ risen from the dead, keep two things in mind: First, Jesus hid His divine qualities while the sinful made their attempt to destroy Him. Now, He manifests His divine qualities. But how does the Christ manifest His true Self? Is it in ways that most of humankind expect? Does it limit, or enhance, the freedom of those around? Does Christ manifest His true Self differently to different disciples?

- And the second thing to keep in mind: Jesus Christ comes to His friends for consolation. Their consolation, that is, and not His own, though He was the one who suffered horribly. Christ comes as the Consoler.

- Here is the “work” of the Fourth Week. It is happy work, but requires effort. This prayer will move you far abroad into all the world God is creating. There, you will find the One who creates you most intimately, too. ❖