

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
 Easter
 April 17, 2022
 rmceely+

He is Risen
 Lord God Almighty
 He is Risen Indeed

This is the day the Lord hath made
 Let us rejoice
 And be glad in it.

We have scaled the Mountain and Victory is ours!

The Goal toward which we have striven
 during 40 long
 And arduous days
 Has finally been achieved.

In a sense, it might have begun in Advent
 As our quest for the Light
 Was challenged by the darkness of Winter.

“The light shineth in the darkness
 and the darkness comprehended it not.”

John 1:5

The metaphoric “Light” stood for the Word of God
 And the love of Jesus
 Shining into our souls and our lives.

But that too has finally been achieved.

During our Lenten fast,
 The physical celestial light has overcome the darkness
 As daylight hours first equaled and then exceeded the night.
 And the spiritual light, the glory of God
 The Word of God
 Now triumphs over the darkness of the evil one.
 As we removed the stain of sin from our souls and our lives.

A blessed divine Sun now beams its warm, clear light
Over the Kingdom of God's elect.

It is no coincidence that our Victory comes as we emerge
From the gloom of Lent
Into the new life we are given by God's forgiveness.
Reminders are all around us
As the trees, the flowers, even the weeds in our garden
Burst forth in new life
The birds have made their nests and their young
Celebrate their new life in their first flight.
The animals bear their young
And on unstable legs they wobble
To a gate particular to their species in remarkably short time.

It is a symbolic Resurrection of Nature
As we look around us
There is a sense of joy, happiness
And wellbeing
That fills the Land

Yes. New life is all around us
as we take our own first tenuous steps
In the new life God has provided.

A Victory of New Life.

Springtime's New Life is but a backdrop
for the Historical Resurrection,
a story too remarkable
for even its participants to comprehend at first.

The Story of the Resurrection is too big
Even for this festival day.

It will take 40 days to tell the story.
Today begins Eastertide. A full season in our Prayer Book.
As we follow the Story of the Resurrection

over the next 40 days of Eastertide
we will see the story grow across the land.

Despite what the angel had told them
“He is Risen
He is not here.”
Peter and John could not understand.
They saw the empty tomb but did not recall
All the times that Jesus had promised
He would rise again on the third day.

When the Jews learned of the empty tomb
They were livid
Bribed the guards to say the followers had stolen the body.
Anything to suppress the truth of the Resurrection.
The Apostles and close disciples thought the Jews
had stolen the body.

Only Mary Magdalene had seen Jesus and knew what had
happened
But they would not believe her.
That is; until the evening of the Resurrection
When Jesus appeared before the 10.
Then they knew.
Although Thomas, our patron Saint
Was not with them and would not believe
Until Jesus stood before him.

It took days for the Story to fully develop.
And the Church follows those 40 days
As Eastertide.

There were the men who walked with Jesus unawares
To Emmaus.
Only belatedly realizing it was Jesus.

There were the mysterious meetings in the closed room.
 When Jesus suddenly appeared before them.

The time Jesus met them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee
 Over 500 people saw him at Eastertide, as St Paul writes
 In First Corinthians.

The news of the Resurrection was cast first among the Jews
 Who packed Jerusalem for the Passover.
 And as they traveled home across the Holy Land
 The news spread like wildfire.

There was no denying it:

He is Risen
 Lord God Almighty
 He is Risen indeed.

The Resurrection was Victory
 Victory over death
 Victory over evil.

But there is a 3rd Resurrection Story
 And just as the historical one erupts into Victory
 Out of despair,

Our Spiritual Resurrection
 The one that takes place within us
 Includes moments of profound sadness.
 It is never easy.

And even in the joy of Christmas,
 There was a distant discordant strain in the background,
 A dooming cry of far off suffering
 To those who looked at the Baby
 But knew the rest of the Story.

That cry was never absent throughout Lent
 It grew louder and louder as we approached Holy Week.
 And reached its crescendo on Friday, the Friday we call Good.

When we reached the 12th Station.
 And the death of the Son of God on the Cross.

Through it all and even at the darkest moment
 There remained a ray of Hope
 Christian Hope
 The Expectancy of the Resurrection.

That hope is reflected in the face of Mary
 As her son is placed on her lap
 At the foot of the cross.
 And she gazes at her dead Son.
 A moment captured by an unlikely source.
 An American Aviator
 Held in a Hanoi prison for 8 years.
 8 years of starvation, disease and torture
 at the hands of his savagely brutal jailers.
 His name was Jeremiah Denton.
 While separated from his church by a dank, foul prison cell
 He was never separated from God.

On Easter Sunday, 1969; in the 4th year of his captivity
 And from the depths of his pain and isolation,
 He wrote this of the crucifixion:

The soldiers stare, then drift away
 Young John finds nothing he can say.
 The veil is rent, the deed is done;
 And Mary holds her only Son.
 His limbs grow stiff; the night grows cold,
 But naught can loose that mother's hold.
 Her gentile, anguished eyes seem blind,
 Who knows what thoughts run through her mind?
 Perhaps she thinks of last week's palms,
 With cheering thousands off'ring alms

Or dreams of Cana on the day
 She nagged him till she got her way.
 Her face shows grief but not despair
 Her head, though bowed, has faith to spare,
 For even now she could suppose
 His thorns might somehow yield a rose.
 Her life with Him was full of signs
 That God writes straight with crooked lines.
 Dark clouds can hide the rising sun
 And all seems lost when all is won.

Jeremiah Denton was the POW who was forced to appear on a
 North Vietnamese propaganda television broadcast
 And blinked the word “torture” in Morse code.
 He was the first POW to get off the plane in the Philippines
 and was later promoted to the rank of Admiral
 he remained in the Navy and served for 34 years.
 He served in the United States Senate

Denton captured that ray of hope in Mary’s face amidst her
 crushing grief,
 The Hope that must have brought him home.

So with the backdrop of the Victory
 of the Springtime Resurrection
 Filling our senses
 And with the unassailable Victory
 Of the truth of the Historic Resurrection
 Firmly in mind,
 The Hope erupting from the Resurrection
 of even a grief stricken Mother,
 Is the Victory of the Resurrection within us all.

The Resurrection is a Victory for all mankind.
 And anchors the truth in our hearts.

So the story of Resurrection is a story of Victory.

Now, the question for us is this:

Jesus has given his life
That we may have new life
Every drop of His blood
And an agonizing death,
Was for us
For our salvation
For our eternal life.

What will we do with that new life?

This is the day that the Lord hath made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

But the way has not been without