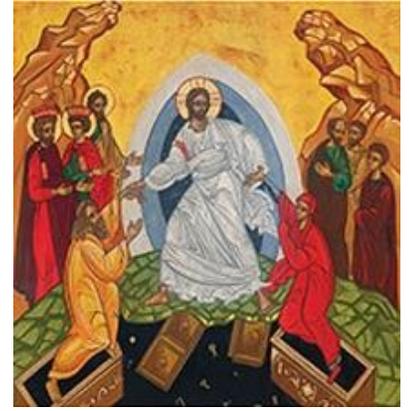


Lenten Reflections for EOHSJ

Easter Sunday 2019

Reflection by Rev. Stephen Porter, KCHS

The Resurrection of the Lord



Imagine yourself back in Mediæval England, round about 1250 or so. It's been a hard, cold winter, food and firewood have been scarce, Lent was an onerous time of the year, yet tinged with hope and joy, for soon the great feast of Easter – the Resurrection of the Lord – will be here. No more fasting, and it's getting warmer, time to sing, the cuckoo is singing – *Sumer is icumen in, lhode sing cuccu, groweþ sed, and bloweþ med, and springþ þe wode anu, sing cuccu!* That is one of the very first songs in Middle English written down to be sung as a roundelay, and it was sung on Easter Sunday, together with a Latin verse – *Perspice Christicola, que dignacio; celicus agricola pro vitis vicio, filio, non parcens exposuit mortis exicio. Qui captivos, semivivos a supplicio, vite donat et secum coronat in celi solio.*

And just in case you don't read Middle English (or Latin!) too well, here's what they were singing about: **Summer has arrived, Sing loudly, cuckoo! The seed is growing, the meadow is blooming, the wood is coming into leaf now, sing, cuckoo! Observe, Christian, such honour! The heavenly farmer, owing to a defect in the vine, not sparing the Son, exposed him to the destruction of death. To the captives half-dead from torment, He gives life and crowns them with himself on the throne of heaven.**

The Church very cleverly took a popular song and gave it a Christian message, as good for us today as for those Middle English folk. Spring time and Lent go hand-in-hand (at least in the northern hemisphere), we are grateful to God that we live in a land that doesn't have the severe frosts and freezes of mediæval Europe, we are grateful to God that our food supply is constant and readily available all year round, and we are grateful to that God – the heavenly farmer – despite our sinfulness – the defect in the vine – did not spare His Son to bring us captives half-dead from torment to crown us with Christ on the throne of heaven.

As Knights and Ladies of an order founded round about the same time as this song was being lustily sung (and it was, I left out a couple of Middle English verses because they are – well NSFW) and yet sung with joy and devotion in the Resurrection of the Lord, just as the cuckoo sings in springtime, we join together with God's creation and God's creatures to sing His praises. The light is upon us! Christ is risen! Truly is He risen! The tomb is empty! Alleluia!

Thank you for letting me share these reflections these past few weeks, may you and yours be blessed this glorious Easter time.

Rev. Stephen Porter, KCHS, was invested in the Order in 2003 and has led pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Fr. Steve is a priest of the Diocese of San Bernardino, and serves at Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Community in Beaumont, California.