

54// HERE BEGINNETH THE RESURRECTION

Heretofore we have made mention of deviation of the human lineage, which dureth from Septuagesima unto Easter. Hereafter we shall make mention of the time of reconciliation. The resurrection of our Lord Jesu Christ was the third day after his death. And of this blessed resurrection seven things be to be considered. First, of the time that he was in the sepulchre, that be three days and three nights he was in the sepulchre, and the third day he arose. Secondly, wherefore he arose not anon when he was dead, but abode unto the third day. Thirdly, how he arose. Fourthly, wherefore his resurrection tarried not until the general resurrection. Fifthly, wherefore he arose. Sixthly, how oft times he appeared in his resurrection. And the seventh, how the holy fathers which were enclosed in a part of hell he delivered, and what he did, etc.

1. OF THE TIME OUR LORD WAS IN THE SEPULCHRE

As to the first point, it ought to be known that Jesus was in the sepulchre three days and three nights. But, after S. Austin, the first day is taken by synechdoche, that is that the last part of the day is taken which dureth from Easter unto the utas [octave] of Whitsuntide, like as holy Church hath ordained. The second day is taken all whole. The third is taken after the first part of the day. Thus there be three days, and every day hath his night going before.

And after Bede the order of the day was changed, and the course ordained, for before, the days went before and the nights followed, after the time of the passion that order was changed, for the nights go before, and this is by mystery. For man first overthrew in the day and fell into the night of sin. And by the passion and resurrection of Jesu Christ he came again from the night of sin unto the day of grace.

2. WHEREFORE OUR LORD AROSE NOT ANON WHEN HE WAS DEAD, BUT ABODE UNTO THE THIRD DAY

As touching the second consideration, it ought to be known that it is according to reason that anon after his death he ought not to arise, but ought to abide unto the third day, and for five reasons.

For To Cure Our Double Death

The first for the signification to that that the light of his death should cure our double death, and therefore one day whole and two nights, he lay in the sepulchre, that by the day we understand the light of his death, and by the two nights our double death. And this reason assigneth the gloss upon S. Luke, Luce vicesimo [i.e., the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Luke, chapter 20], upon this text: *Oportebat Christum pati*, etc.

For To Prove That His Death Was Veritable

The second for certain probation. For right so as in the mouth of twain or of three is the witness established, right so in three days is proved all deed and fait veritable. And to the end to prove that his death was veritable, he would lie therein three days.

For To Show His Puissance

The third for to show his puissance [power]; for if he had arisen anon, it should seem that he had not such might for to give him life as he had to raise him. And this reason toucheth the Apostle *ad Corinthios xv* [I Corinthians 15:3, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”]. Therefore is there first made mention of his death. Like as his death was verily showed so his very resurrection is showed and declared.

For To Figure the Restoration

Fourthly, for to figure the restoration. And this reason assigneth Petrus Ravenensis: “Jesu Christ would be three days in his sepulchre in figure, in benefit doing.” That is to wit, to restore them that be fallen, to repair them that be in the earth, and to redeem them that were in hell.

For the Representing the Treble Estate of Rightful Men

The fifth, for the representing of treble estate of rightful men. And this reason assigneth S. Gregory upon Ezechiel saying:

The sixth day of the week Jesus suffered death, the Saturday he lay in the sepulchre, the Sunday he arose. The present life is yet to us the sixth day, for in anguishes and sorrows we be tormented. The Saturday also is that we rest us in our sepulchre, for after the death we shall find the rest for our souls. The Sunday is the eighth day. That day we shall be free of the death and of all sorrow in body and in soul in glory. Then the sixth day is to us sorrow, the seventh rest, and the eighth glory.

3. HOW OUR LORD AROSE

Mightily

As to the third consideration, how he arose, it appeareth verily that he arose mightily. For by his proper might he arose, *Johannis nono: Potestatem habeo, etc.*: “I have said I have power to deliver my soul and I have power to resume it again.” That is to say, “to die when I will.”

Joyously

Secondly, he arose joyously, for he took away all misery, all infirmity, and all servitude. Whereof he saith the gospel of John, *Johannis xxvi.*, he said: “When I shall arise again I shall

advance me and go tofore you into Galilee, where ye shall see me free and delivered.” *Galilee* is as much to say “transmigration,” that is to say “dying.” Jesu Christ then, when he arose, went before us, for he went from misery to glory, and from corruption to incorruption. Whereof S. Leo the Pope saith: “After the passion of Jesu Christ, the bonds of death broken, he was transported from infirmity to virtue, from mortality to perpetuity, and from villainy to glory.”

Profitably

Thirdly, he rose profitably, for he carried with him his prey. Whereof saith Jeremy the fourth chapter, *Ascendit leo de cubili, etc.*: “The lion is risen out of his bed. Jesus ascended on high upon the cross, and the robber of the people enhanced himself.” Jesu Christ robbed hell, wherein was the human lineage. As he had said, *Cum exaltatus fuero, etc.* [John 12:32], “When I shall ascend on high I shall draw to me all mine” of whom hell hath holden and kept the souls, which were enclosed in darkness and the bodies in sepulture.

Marvellously

Fourthly, he arose marvellously. For he arose without opening of the sepulchre which abode fast closed. For like as he issued out of his mother's belly, and to his disciples, the doors closed and shut, so he issued out of his sepulchre. Whereof is read in *Scholastica Historia*, of a monk of St. Laurence Without the Walls, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord one thousand one hundred and eleven, which marvelled of a girdle with which he was girt, that without undoing or opening it was cast tofore him. Whereof when he saw it he marvelled, and he heard a voice in the air saying: “Thus may Jesu Christ issue out of his sepulchre, and the sepulchre all closed.”

Truly

Fifthly, he arose truly, for he arose in his proper body, and by six manners he showed that he was verily risen. First, by the angel which lied not. Secondly, by many and oftentimes appearing. Thirdly, by eating openly and by no art fantastic. Fourthly, by palpation of his very body. Fifthly, by ostention of his wounds, by which he showed that it was the proper body in which he had verily suffered death. Sixthly, by his presence in coming into the house, the gates shut, when he entered suddenly and invisibly, by which he showed that his body was glorified. Seventhly, he arose immortally, for he shall never die, *Johannis vi.: Christus resurgens, etc.* [Romans 6:9: “For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.”]

And S. Denis in an epistle that he made to Demophilus saith that Jesu Christ after his ascension said to an holy man named Carpo, “I am all ready yet to suffer for to save man” – by which it seemeth that if it were need, that yet he were ready to suffer death as it is contained in the same epistle. This holy man, Carpo, told to S. Denis that a paynim perverted a Christian man and brought him out of the faith. And this Carpo took such anger therefore in his heart that he was sick. And this Carpo was of so great holiness that as oft as he sang mass an heavenly vision appeared to him. But when he should pray for the conversion of them both daily, he prayed God that both twain might be burnt in a fire.

And on a time about midnight he made this prayer unto God, and suddenly the house in which he was in, was divided in two parts, and a right great furnace appeared there. And he looked up and beheld the heaven, and saw it open, and Jesu Christ which was environed with a great multitude of angels, and beside the furnace these two men were trembling for great dread that they had; the which men were bitten of serpents that issued out of the furnace, which drew them by force into the furnace; and also of other men they were reprov'd and villain'd.

And this holy man Carpo in beholding them had great delight, and took pleasure in their punishment; in such wise that he left the vision of heaven and set not thereby, but was angry that they fell not suddenly into the furnace.

And then as he looked up into heaven, he saw the vision that he had before seen. And Jesu Christ which had pity of these two men arose up out of his throne, and came unto them with a great multitude of angels, and put forth his hand and delivered them. And Jesus said to Carpo: "Smite me, from henceforth I am ready to suffer for to save man."

This ensample reciteth S. Denis.

4. WHEREFORE HIS RESURRECTION TARRIED NOT UNTIL THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

As to the fourth article, wherefore he abode not until the general resurrection, three reasons be assigned.

The first for the dignity of his body, for he was deified and came from the Deity, and therefore it was no reason that his body should so long lie in the earth. Whereof David saith, *Non dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem*: "Thou shalt not suffer thine holy body to see corruption."

The second reason is for the steadfastness of the faith. For if he had not then arisen, the faith had perished, men would not have believed that he had been very God. And that appeareth well, for in his passion, save our Lady, all lost faith. But when they had knowledge of his resurrection they recovered it again, as saith S. Paul, *Si Christus non surrexerit vane est fides nostra*: "If Jesu Christ had not risen our faith had been vain or none" [I Corinthians 15:17]

The third cause [is] for the exemplar of our resurrection: there should be but few that should believe the resurrection to come if Jesu Christ had not risen. And this is our example and our hope. And therefore say the apostles, "Jesu Christ is arisen and we shall arise, for his resurrection is cause of ours." Whereof saith S. Gregory: "Our Lord by example hath showed that he promised in reward, as that we should know him to have risen. Thus in ourself we should have hope of the reward of his resurrection, and we ought to know that Jesu Christ would not prolong his resurrection above three days, to the end that desperation should not be in the world."

5. WHEREFORE OUR LORD AROSE

As to the fifth article, it is wherefore he arose. He arose for four things much profitable to us. For his resurrection made the justification of our sins, enseigneth new life of manners,

engendereth the hope of reward, and ordaineth the resurrection of all.

Of the first [justification of our sins] saith S. Paul *ad Romanos* [Romans 4:25]: “Jesu Christ died for our sins and arose for to justify us.”

Of the second [new life of manners]: “Like as Jesu Christ arose by the glory of the Father, which is a new glorious life, so ought we in spiritual life to take new manners” [Romans 6:4].

Of the third [hope]: “By his great mercy God hath raised us in hope of life by the resurrection of Jesu Christ” [I Peter 1:3].

Of the fourth [the resurrection of all] it is said to us in Scripture: “Jesu Christ arose from death, for by man is death come to men, and by man, that is Jesu Christ, the life is come to men. Thus be they the first of dead men. Adam of them that died, and Jesu Christ of them that be alive by his resurrection” [I Cor. 15:20].

And thus it appeareth that Jesu Christ had four properties in his resurrection.

The first is, that our resurrection is deferred unto the last resurrection, and Jesu Christ arose the third day. As saith the gloss upon this psalm: *Ad vesperum demorabitur fletus, etc.*, “At evensong time shall be weeping, and on the morn gladness and joy” [Psalm 29:6]. The gloss saith that the resurrection of Jesu Christ is cause sufficient of the resurrection of souls in this present time, and of the bodies in time to come.

The second property is, that we rise by him, and he arose by himself. Whereof saith S. Ambrose: “How might he seek help to raise his body, which raised other?”

The third property is, that we become dust or ashes, and his body might not be turned into ashes.

The fourth property is, that his resurrection is cause sacramental of our resurrection.

6. HOW OFTTIMES OUR LORD APPEARED IN HIS RESURRECTION

As touching the sixth article, how oft he appeared the day of his resurrection. He appeared five times.

First to Mary Magdalene, *Marci ultimo* [Mark 16:9]. After his resurrection he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which is figure of penitents. And for five reasons he appeared to her. First, for she loved him most ardently. Because she loved so much, God forgave and pardoned her many sins. Secondly, for to show that he died for sinners, Matthew ix.: *Non veni vocare, etc.*, “I came not for to call rightful men but sinners to penance.” Thirdly, for to verify his word, Matthew xxi.: *Amen dico quia meretrices, etc.*: To the hypocrites and pharisees he saith that common women and the publicans should go before them to the kingdom of heaven. Fourthly, for because that like as a woman was messenger of death, so a woman should be messenger of life, after the

gloss. Fifthly, like as sin abounded, so should grace more abound, like as the apostle saith *ad Romanos* v [Romans 5:20].

The second time he appeared to the three Maries which returned from the monument, when he said to them: *Avete*, God greet you; and then they approached him and held his feet. And that is the figure of humble prayers. To whom our Lord appeared, as well for the reason of the nature as for the reason of the affection. For they held his feet, which signifieth the affection of the heart.

Thirdly he appeared to St. Peter, but when or in what place it is not known, but if it were by adventure when he returned from the monument with St. John. For it might well be that St. Peter in some place turned from St. John, where God appeared to him, or by adventure when he was alone in the monument. Like as it is said in *Scholastica Historia*, or peradventure in a cave or a fosse [ditch]. For it is read in the histories, when he renied and forsook our Lord, that he fled into a cave where as the mountain is which is called the mountain of the cock; or else after that it is said that he wept three days continually after that he had renied God, and there Jesus appeared to him and comforted him, saying: “Peter, bear the virtue of obedience,” to whom our Lord showeth him.

Fourthly he appeared to his disciples which went to Emaus, which is as much as to say as “desire of counsel,” and signifieth to visit the poor members of Jesu Christ and to help them. As it is said in the gospel: Go and sell all that thou hast, and give it to poor people.”

Fifthly he appeared to his disciples which were together in a place closed. And this signifieth religious men that be in the world with the gates of their five wits closed. These five apparitions were the day of his resurrection.

And these five representeth the priest in his mass when he turneth him five times to the people. But the third turning is in silence, which signifieth the apparition made to S. Peter, which is not known when it was made ne in what place.

Sixthly he appeared the eighth day to his disciples when St. Thomas was there, which had said that he would not believe it till he had seen the wounds, the nails, and that he had put his hands in his side.

The seventh time he appeared fishing, *Johannis ultimo* [last chapter of John’s gospel], and that signifieth preachers which be fishers of men.

The eighth time he appeared to his disciples in the Mount Tabor, *Matthew ultimo*, and that signifieth them that been contemplative, for in the said hill was our Lord transfigured.

The ninth time he appeared to eleven disciples where they sat at table, whereat he reproveth their incredulity and hardness of heart; by which we understand the sinners in the eleven number of transgression set, whom our Lord by his mercy sometime visiteth.

The tenth time he appeared to his disciples in the Mount of Olives, by which is signified them that be full of mercy and that love compassion, to whom our Lord appeareth, which is Father of mercy and of pity. From this place he ascended up into heaven.

Other Manner of Apparitions

There be three other manner of apparitions of which is made mention, which were made the day of the resurrection, but they be not had in the text of the gospel.

The first was that he appeared to S. James the Less, which is named James Alphei, of which thou shalt find in his legend.

The second that he appeared was to Joseph, as it is read in the gospel of Nicodemus. For when the Jews had heard that Joseph had demanded the body of Jesus of Pilate, and that he had put it in his monument, they were angry and had indignation on him, and took him and put him in a secret place, where diligently they closed him and kept him, and would have slain him after their sabbath day. And Jesus the night of his resurrection entered into the house where he was in, and overlift up the four corners of the house, and wiped and cleansed his visage and kissed him. And without breaking of any lock or seal he brought him into his house in Arimathea.

The third is after that it is believed he appeared unto his mother Mary, the glorious Virgin, and how be it that the holy Evangelists speak nothing thereof, the Church of Rome approveth it. For the same day is made station at our Lady the major. And if we should not believe because the Evangelists make no mention thereof, it should follow that after his resurrection he appeared not to her; but that ought not to be believed that such a son should not leave his mother without visiting, and do to her so little honour. And peradventure the Evangelists speak no word of her because it appeareth not to them but to set witness of the resurrection. And the Virgin Mary ought not to be set in for no witness. For if the words of strange women were reputed for leasings, much more should the mother be because of the love that she had to him that was her son. And though the Evangelists have not written it, yet they knew well for certain that it is right that first he should enhance and comfort her that had most pain and sorrow for his death. And that witnesseth S. Ambrose in the third book of Virgins: *Vidit Maria, etc.*: “Mary saw the resurrection and she believed it perfectly. Mary Magdalene saw it and yet she doubted it.”

7. HOW HE DELIVERED THE HOLY FATHERS WHICH WERE ENCLOSED IN A PART OF HELL

Of the seventh, how Jesu Christ drew the holy fathers out of hell, and what he made there, the Evangelist telleth not clearly. Nevertheless Saint Austin in a sermon, and Nicodemus in his gospels, show it somewhat. And Saint Austin saith:

Anon as Jesu Christ had rendered the spirit, the soul that was united to his Godhead was quick and living in the deepness of hell descended. And when he was at deepest of the darkness, like as a robber shining and terrible to the tyrants of hell, they beheld him and began to demand and enquire:

Who is he that is so strong, so terrible, so clear and so shining? The world, which is to us subject, sent to us never such one dead, ne he sent to us never such gifts into hell. Who is he then that is so constant that is entered into the furthest end of our parts, and he doubteth not only of our torments, but yet he hath unbound them of their bonds whom we held and kept? And they that were wont to wail and weep under our torments, assail us now by their health. And now not only they fear us, but now threaten and menace us.

And they said to their prince: “What prince art thou? All thy gladness is perished and all thy joys be converted into weepings. When thou hangedst him in the cross thou knewest not what damage thou shouldst suffer in hell.”

After these cruel words of them of hell, at the commandment of our Lord all the locks, all the bars and shuttings been broken, and to-frushed. And lo! the people of saints that come kneeling tofore him in crying with piteous voice, saying:

Our Redeemer! Thou art come for to redeem the world, we have abided thee every day; thou art descended into hell for us, and leave us not, but that we be with thee when thou shalt return to thy brethren. Lord sweet God, show that thou hast despoiled hell, and bind the author of death with his bonds, render to the world now gladness, and quench the pains; and for thy pity unbind the caitiffs from servitude whiles thou art here, and assoil the sinners when thou descendest into hell, them of thy party.

This said Saint Austin.

And it is read in the gospel of Nicodemus that Carinus and Leucius, sons of old Simeon, arose with Jesu Christ. And they were adjured and sworn of Ananias, of Caiaphas, of Nicodemus, of Joseph, and of Gamaliel, that they should tell and say what Jesus did in hell. And they rehearsed and said:

When we were with our fathers in the place of obscurity and darkness, suddenly it was all so light and clear as the colour of the sun, like purple, gold, and light royal, which illumined all the habitation upon us. And anon Adam the father of the human lineage began to enjoy, saying: “This light is the light of the creator of the light sempiternal, which promised to send to us his light perpetual.”

And Isaiah cried: “This is the light of God the Father, like as I said living in the earth: ‘The people that were in darkness saw a great light.’”

Then came our Father Simeon, and in joying said: “Glorify ye our Lord, for I received Christ, a child born in the world, in to mine hands in the Temple, and I was constrained by the Holy Ghost to say, *Nunc viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum*:

‘I have now seen with mine eyen thine health which bringeth and hath made it ready before the face of all thy people.’”

After, came one which seemed to be an hermit, and when we demanded him what he was, he answered that he was “John that baptized Christ, and he that am gone before him for to make ready his way, and showed him with my finger when I said: *Ecce agnus Dei*, and am descended for to show to you that he cometh soon to visit you.”

Then said Seth: “When I came to the gate of Paradise for to pray our Lord to send me his angel, and that he would give to me of the oil of mercy for to anoint the body of Adam my father, which was sick, the angel Michael appeared to me and said: ‘Labour not in praying by weeping for things here, anon they were transfigured and were no more seen.’”

And hereof speaketh Gregory Nyssen and S. Austin, like as is found in some books.

Anon as Jesu Christ descended into hell, the night began to wax clear. And anon the porter black and horrible among them in silence began to murmur, saying: “Who is he that is so terrible and of clearness so shining? Our master received never none such into hell, ne the world cast never none such into our cavern. This is an assailer, and not debtor, a breaker and destroyer, and no sinner but a despoiler, we see him a judge but no beseecher, he comes for to fight and not to be overcome, a caster out and not here a dweller.”

The [iconography of the Resurrection](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other scriptural events and for saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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