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# EASTER

## DAY MASS

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU  
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault  
(Fontgombault, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026)

*Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum.*  
I arose and am still with Thee.  
(Introit of the Mass)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
My dearly beloved Sons,

**T**HIS IS the day the Lord has made, the solemnity of solemnities, our Passover: the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Such is the proclamation of the Martyrology. A day of joy. A day of jubilation! Light has triumphed over darkness. Life has conquered death. The empty tomb, a few sagging cloths, the shroud, bear witness to the presence of the One they could not contain. The earth shook. The guards posted nearby fled in terror. A complete silence now envelops the place.

Here are a few women. Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James, and Salome, have just come from the marketplace. They have bought spices to anoint the body of their Lord. In the rush of events and because of the Sabbath, it had not been possible to perform the last rites for the Crucified One. Even before dawn, on this first day of the week, they set out, worried that they might not be able to move by themselves the heavy stone closing the entrance to the burial cave.

But behold! the stone has been rolled away. In place of the corpse, there is a young man, clothed in white:

Be not affrighted. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He is risen: He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him, as He told you.<sup>a</sup>

a. *Mk* 16:6–7.

Despite the young man's warning, the poor women emerged from the tomb more dead than alive. Is this not the first step for anyone who encounters God? Within him, something must die so that something may live. Therein lies a mystery. The holy women, the apostles, the pilgrims of Emmaus, Thomas, and so many others—we ourselves—must begin by dying to our certainties, our assumptions. No, He is not dead. He is truly risen. Such is the powerful affirmation of this Easter morning, which, after inspiring fear, establishes peace, a peace that transcends any human peace, a peace that only God can offer.

It is this peace that we experience in its purity and simplicity, and also in its majesty, in the introit of this morning's Mass:

I have risen, and I am still with Thee, alleluia;  
Thou hast laid Thy hand upon Me, alleluia;  
Thy knowledge is become wonderful, alleluia, alleluia.

b. vv. 18, 5, 6.

These verses are taken from Psalm 138.<sup>b</sup> It is a psalm of praise to the infinite wisdom and immensity of God, without a direct connection to the Resurrection of Christ. While one might have expected a triumphant melody—and other pieces from this morning's Mass will fulfil that expectation—the fourth Gregorian mode used by the composer establishes, at the beginning of today's solemn celebration, a prayerful, serene, introspective, and solemn atmosphere, bearing witness to the profound mystery we are attending.

And what is this mystery? The mystery of the Lord's resurrection, without a doubt. Yes, but there is more to it. Our hearts open and expand when we realize that these few verses are placed in the mouth of the Lord, who is speaking to His

Father: “I have risen, and I am still with Thee,” and even, remaining more faithful to the text of the psalm: “I awake: I am still with Thee.”<sup>c</sup>

c. Ps 138 [139]:18.

Dom Gajard comments:

Consider the wealth of peace and tenderness involved in this *adhuc tecum sum*— I am still with Thee. Already one senses the being who forgets himself, so to speak, and who thinks only of God, and is about to merge into Him<sup>1</sup>.

While everything is about to become hectic around the tomb, in the wake of the announcement by the holy women, and while the upheaval caused by the Lord’s resurrection is to spread to the ends of the earth, until the end of the world, the introit invites us to consider Christ only. We are, so to speak, inside the tomb at the very moment of the resurrection.

Throughout His earthly life, the Word, in His human nature, conversed with His Father. The first words recorded by the evangelists, spoken to His parents at the finding in the Temple, confirm this: “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?”<sup>d</sup> This dialogue ended on the cross at the precise moment when Christ uttered these final words: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”<sup>e</sup>

d. Lk 2:43.

e. Lk 23:46.

How can we not think that the first initiative of the Risen Christ was to resume this dialogue interrupted by His death and to address His Father? “I awake: I am still with Thee.”

Christ will later address these words to His apostles as well. This is one of the consequences of His victory. These words also apply to us:

Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.<sup>f</sup>

f. Mt 28:19–20.

Benedict XVI taught:

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1. Dom GAJARD, *Les plus belles mélodies grégoriennes commentées par Dom Gajard* (Solesmes, 1985), p. 143.

*g. Deus caritas est, n. 12.*

The real novelty of the New Testament lies not so much in new ideas, as in the figure of Christ himself, Who gives flesh and blood to those concepts—an unprecedented realism.<sup>g</sup>

On this Easter morning, we must move beyond a purely conceptual faith. It is the person of the Risen Christ whom we must encounter and who must transform our lives. We will truly be believers only if His Passover becomes our own passover.

*h. Rm 10:9.*

Saint Paul writes to the Romans: “For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”<sup>h</sup> A beating heart nourishes life. To believe in one’s heart is to allow the good news of the Gospel to reshape our lives in the image of Christ’s life. Then our lives will spread throughout the desolate lands of our world the sweet fragrance of Christ, the peace that comes from God. Then our words will be credible and give our neighbours reason to hope, inviting them to follow Christ.

Between His first words spoken to His Father and the peace He brought to his disciples, might not the Risen Christ have visited his Mother? His victory is also Mary’s victory. Let us rejoice with her in great joy.

Holy Easter. Amen, Alleluia.

