

EASTER (ABC)

Eostre, the word from which Easter is derived, was a pagan Anglo-Saxon Goddess of the dawn or sunrise. The point of sunrise, the East, is named after her. Centuries ago the Church invested this pagan festival with new meaning. As the sunrise disperses the darkness of the night so Christ rising from the dead disperses the darkness of sin and death and Satan. When adults were baptised in the early church, to emphasise the above point, they literally faced the west, where the sun goes down and renounced Prince of Darkness and then they turned round in the opposite direction and faced the rising Sun in the East to proclaim their faith in Jesus, the light of the world.

Resurrection is the central teaching of our Faith for without it our believing in God would be in vain, our lives bereft of meaning. As St Augustine told Christians in the 5th century "we are Easter people and Alleluia is our song"

Even from a rational point of view the Resurrection makes sense. Science tells us that nothing in nature, not even the tiniest particle, can disappear without a trace. Nature does not know extinction - all it knows is transformation. It is more noticeable at this time of the year when we see the natural world awakening and coming to life. But since we humans are the cream of God's creation, life would be meaningless if death were to signal the end of our existence followed by an eternity of nothingness.

However, Eternal life must begin in the here and now if we are ever going to possess it eternally. It's not an abstract truth. For instance, whenever we have our love rejected and we love again - that's resurrection. Whenever we pick up the pieces of a broken life and begin again - that's resurrection. Whenever we turn our backs on anything associated with what St John Paul 11 called the culture of death, or anything which dehumanizes or degrades people, that's resurrection. Whenever we forgive or are forgiven there is resurrection all

round. These moments, however, point to a deeper longing which God has sown within the human heart. It is an eternal seed, a yearning for that fullness of life and love which only He can satisfy in the life to come.

May Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness from our minds and hearts?