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The Resurrection of Our Lord

On 14 March 2018, one of the world's most brilliant and influential men passed away.

Stephen Hawking, the celebrated astrophysicist, died at the age of 76, having struggled with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) for over 55 years. He summed up his decades of work in a book which he titled, "A Brief History of Time". Hawking, for all his brilliance and his courage in battling Lou Gehrig's disease was an avowed atheist. He said, "No one created the universe, and no one is directing our fate." He once described people of faith as those who are afraid of the dark. To Hawking, what we are celebrating on this Easter Sunday is pure fantasy, or probably more accurately, a fairy tale.

And yet, we know, there are many without the scientific credentials or the probing mind of Stephen Hawking who would concur. For them, to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is utter nonsense. No one that they know has ever risen from the dead. No one that they know has ever seen anyone rise from the dead. To them, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is either absolutely impossible, or worse, makes no difference to their life.

Yet here we are, believers in this stupendous Mystery, 2000 years after the fact. We hold to the truth of the rising of Our Lord from the dead with steadfast conviction and sincerity. We believe in the Resurrection despite very intelligent people like Hawking telling us we are naive or deluded or ignorant or superstitious. We cling to the Resurrection of Christ despite the many in our world today who have renounced the faith that they once held, and have turned and walked away from Christ.

For us who believe, the Resurrection of Our Lord makes all the difference in the world. By rising from the dead, as He said He would, our Blessed Lord confirmed all that He said about Himself:

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believes in me will live forever."

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me."

“I am the Light of the world. He that follows Me walks not in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn. 8:12).

If Christ had not been raised, says St. Paul, our faith would be in vain, and we would truly be the sorriest of men.

We believe in the Resurrection of Christ, not because it blunts life's pain and sadness. We do not believe in Our Lord's Resurrection because it makes us feel good. We do not believe in the Resurrection because it gives us a religious reason to celebrate spring. We believe in the Resurrection because hundreds of those who did know Jesus Christ when He was on earth, saw Him after His Resurrection. And they testified with their blood to His rising: they were put to death for claiming that He had risen, and they would not renounce what they saw and experienced. And this is what the Catholic Church has been doing for the past 2000 years: handing on this marvelous truth: Jesus Christ, Who was crucified, died and was buried, rose again by His power as God, and is alive today in His human body and soul, as well as His divinity.

This truth changes everything. Because Christ has died and rose from the dead, we can have hope. We know our world is rife with evil, danger, terror, violence, greed, impurity: you name it. Babies are not safe in their mother's wombs; our school children are not safe in their schools; Moslems are plotting to overrun Europe and reestablish the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate; the Church is crippled with corrupt and even evil priests and Bishops, the government operates like a bunch of high school kids. The list goes on and on. And yet, because of the Resurrection of Our Lord, we know that in the end, evil will not prevail. The Resurrection promises us that goodness and truth, grace and life will triumph over wickedness, evil, hatred and fear.

This is not looking at the world through rose-colored glasses. This is looking at the world through the Resurrection of Christ, which changes everything: “That was the true light that enlightens every man who comes into this world”, (Jn. 1:9)

As for Mr. Hawkings, God have mercy on his soul, and those who agree with him. They are the ones who are afraid: afraid to admit that this world is not left to its own power and its own fate. They may be able to explore the vastness of space and the depth of time, but they have missed the whole point of it all: “All things were made by him: and without Him was not made anything that was made.” (Jn. 1:3)