

Homily given by the Most Rev. Patrick Kelly,
Archbishop of Liverpool, England,

Easter Sunday 2008

(The Easter Mass was broadcast on BBC TV)

Introduction:

Peace be with you. That is the word that rings out from Liverpool for all today, because that was the word of the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead to the apostles who had deserted, denied, doubted him. It is as a successor to those forgiven, reconciled sinners that I must speak them today. It is the word of a Lord whose sign is not a blazing furnace of power and spectacle but a candle's gentle ray of patience, mercy, forgiveness. It is for that victory over the forces of domination, control, barbarity, arrogance, the choir now in our name give thanks and praise.

Homily:

For more than thirty years I have been privileged to accompany our sisters and brothers who are deaf in their life as disciples of our Lord. Four weeks ago faces shone with joy around the world. My deaf friends received the sign: "Today Pope Benedict greeted deaf pilgrims from Poland using sign language." My deaf friends from many countries, often alone, isolated saw the sign: you are one with all the disciples of Jesus.

And today we need our deaf sisters and brothers: the Resurrection of the Lord is the feast of those friends I have learnt to name not deaf people but eye people: those who look, watch, notice, see.

Mary saw the stone rolled away: as we heard Mary sing:

"I saw the tomb of the living Christ: I saw the angel witnesses: I saw the shroud and clothes of the grave."

John saw the linen cloths discarded because needed no more;

Simon Peter saw the cloths and the veil that had shrouded his face:

discarded without ceremony, as if in haste:

useless: for the one who can die no more.

And, as you will remember at the end of this Mass when we join tens of thousands of pilgrims in Rome: Simon Peter in a circus close to a hill called Vatican would be crucified, an old, old man, rather than deny what he had seen on that first Easter Day.

And what is certain about Jesus is the promise given to us, for, as we shall soon proclaim, we believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

So above all today our praise must be earthy: glorious glass: candle: flower: garden: song: organ: drum: trumpet: vestment: banner: and above all bread and wine: what earth has given and human hands have made changed this day by the overshadowing Holy Spirit into the living body, the life-giving blood of our glorious risen Lord: among us in lowliness; for force, control, domination, have been conquered and as children we are free.

That freedom we now proclaim by renewing the promises, the yes to life that flows from our baptism of water and the Holy Spirit. A yes to life; a yes to life as fittingly spelt out by Cardinal O'Brien in his Easter Day sermon. A yes to the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts. And where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.