

Ten After Ten Session 33: He Rose from the Dead...continued

645 By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his passion. Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm. For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith.

646 Christ's Resurrection was not a return to earthly life, as was the case with the raisings from the dead that he had performed before Easter... In his risen body he passes from the state of death to another life beyond time and space. At Jesus' Resurrection his body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit: he shares the divine life in his glorious state.

647 No one was an eyewitness to Christ's Resurrection and no evangelist describes it. No one can say how it came about physically. Still less was its innermost essence, his passing over to another life, perceptible to the senses. Although the Resurrection was an historical event that could be verified by the sign of the empty tomb and by the reality of the apostles' encounters with the risen Christ, still it remains at the very heart of the mystery of faith as something that transcends and surpasses history.

648 Christ's Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history... The Father's power "raised up" Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son's humanity, including his body, into the Trinity.

649 As for the Son, he effects his own Resurrection by virtue of his divine power... he affirms explicitly: "I lay down my life, that I may take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

650 The Fathers contemplate the Resurrection from the perspective of the divine person of Christ who remained united to his soul and body, even when these were separated from each other by death: For as death is produced by the separation of the human components, so Resurrection is achieved by the union of the two.

651 All truths, even those most inaccessible to human reason, find their justification if Christ by his Resurrection has given the definitive proof of his divine authority, which he had promised.

652 Christ's Resurrection is the fulfillment of the promises both of the Old Testament and of Jesus himself during his earthly life. The phrase "in accordance with the Scriptures" indicates that Christ's Resurrection fulfilled these predictions.

653 The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection. He had said: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he"... Christ's Resurrection is closely linked to the Incarnation of God's Son and is its fulfillment in accordance with God's eternal plan.

654 The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. This new life is above all justification that reinstates us in God's grace, "so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace. It brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection.

655 Finally, Christ's Resurrection—and the risen Christ himself—is the principle and source of our future resurrection: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The risen Christ lives in the hearts of his faithful while they await that fulfillment. In Christ, Christians "have tasted... the powers of the age to come" and their lives are swept up by Christ into the heart of divine life, so that they may "live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."