

# THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

## Truly Risen

There's a lot in that *truly*. Risen from death, risen from sleep, risen from rejection and separation; risen from condemnation, from a dishonoured grave. Risen from the realms of the damned who are hanged on a tree.

### Get A Life

The best of us has only a little of life, and the life we have a little of isn't much of a life anyway, compared to the real thing. God - now that's different. God is alive! Blazingly he exists, like an inexhaustible, infinite star; nonsensical image, I know: but there's no human language to talk of his life, *because* all the life we humans know is only partial. Beethoven lived the most massive and intense musical life. But he was rotten at cooking. Elizabeth David was the most refined and elegant of cooks, but she couldn't get marriage right. Neither could Henry VIII, but he was good at dancing. Everyone has a little of life: but Elizabeth went off her food, and Beethoven went deaf, and Henry died of obesity and syphilis. Still, this partiality in our life is part of the magic of being human. Jonathan Creek isn't Hercule Poirot. No-one can be both genders at once, which makes any one of us only partial in our humanity; but there would be very little romance if it wasn't like that. We're prisoners of time, and can't (despite our best attempts) live, even for a little while, as Renaissance princes, or as Pharaohs, or as mediaeval monks. But it is because of that partiality that we can visit *other* cultures, see the stupendous works of *past* peoples, and marvel at the *variety* of human culture.

### From The Heavens The Lord Looks Forth...

...and sees all the children of men, as bright and kaleidoscopic reflectors, each alive with the received light of God, whose Word "enlightens everyone who comes into this world". God rejoices in the partiality, the variety, the colours and times and changes of his handiwork. He knows the purpose of all this variegation, all the little separated atoms of the human face. He knows why it was vital for each of us to be as we are, each a unique tessera, designed to contribute to a single mosaic. In the story of the Paschal Mystery, even the broken and vitiated pieces have their irreplaceable gift to give: even Judas, even Pilate's wife, even the mocking criminal at his

left hand. Dark and light, they are all grist to the mills of God: and in relation to God they will all find their place, and will all shine exactly as he intended. The aim is that the whole cosmos, and every part of it, should inherit and flourish aloft its own likeness to Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of God, and thus the fulness of all that is. The Resurrection, therefore, isn't only the rising of one of the children of men, the one who is rescued from the power of death. It is like a chain reaction, which has introduced an entirely new dimension to being human. The opening of our nature to divine life means that we must not only learn to walk upright, wash behind our own ears, pay the community charge, be kind to animals and to one another, keep our promises and do justice: we must also learn to live like God, learn to live that immense, sovereign life which belongs to the Creator, and is offered to us in the mystery of Jesus.

### Life In Its Fulness

This means a profound revolution in the way we think of ourselves, the limits we set for ourselves, and the meaning we seek in our lives and the lives of other people. We have to break the cynical assessment we've come to accept, and read the word "human" in a new way. That partial, limited life we've learned to accept is only a temporary stage. We are going to shed it - in voluntary and involuntary ways - and to lay it down, in the spirit of Jesus, and be raised, truly, as he is; insofar as we do this, God will have the space in which to begin our rebirth, our remaking in Easter format. God lives fully, totally. He knows how to do it, and he knows the way to make us do it too. Now, the "you" that God loves has to be, not the present, partial model, with its stupid prejudices, its meanness, its petty poverty-stricken idea of what life is about. God can't love that (he might feel sorry for it, and seek to make it live more fully). No: what God loves (and already knows) is the "you" that will be raised up, eternal and incorruptible, open to the glorious prospect of inheriting divine life and grace. *There* is someone the Father can *love*. That is what we have to grow into, by his grace. Only our addiction to this partial life can stand in our way. "O be swift, my soul, to answer Him - be jubilant, my feet!" A truly happy Easter to you!  
*Fr Philip*