

Chapter VII

He Rose From The Dead

Translated From The French By MRS. J. Sadlier.
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FIFTH ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

Descended into Hell, the third day arose from the Dead

121. Water Changed into Oil. - The Resurrection of Our Lord has always been the greatest, or, at least, one of the greatest festivals of the Church. No! It IS the greatest, definitely! The first Christians passed in prayers and pious ceremonies the night of Holy Saturday till the auspicious dawn of Easter Day. It was on this occasion that a very extraordinary miracle once took place in Jerusalem. All were absorbed in their holy occupations, when the deacons suddenly perceived that the lamps were going out; the worst of it was that there was no oil in the sacristy wherewith to replenish them. They were about to be plunged in darkness. Every one was troubled and uneasy; the deacons, who had charge of the lamps, knew not what to do. It was only the patriarch, St. Narcissus, who died in 222 A.D., that took no heed of what was passing. When told of it, he contented himself with saying: "Bring me some water in a large basin." It was brought to him accordingly; he repeats some prayers, makes the sign of the Cross over it, and commands the deacons to pour some of it into the expiring lamps. Wonderful to relate, the water was changed into excellent oil. When daylight came, and the lamps were no longer needed, each one secured a little of this miraculous oil, some of which was still in preservation, more than an hundred years after, in the time of the historian Eusebius, of Caesarea, who relates this fact in a work written about 330 A.D. - GODESCARD, Vies des Saints, 29th October (St Narcissus).

122. The Easter Alleluia. - Have you observed, my dear children, how joyous the Church is on Easter Day? Her joy is translated, one may say, into every language; she repeats at every moment the words Alleluia! Behold the day which the Lord has made! Christ is risen! St. Margaret of Antioch, virgin and martyr, being interrogated by the judges around the year 304 A.D. on her religion, answered without hesitation, that she was a Christian. "What an absurdity! to adore a man who was nailed to an infamous gibbet!" "How do you know that that man was crucified!" demanded the courageous Christian. "We know it by your Gospels, which you regard as your sacred books." "It is true we regard the Gospels as our sacred books, but that same Gospel which tells us that Christ died on the cross tells us also that He rose again from the dead. By dying, He showed Himself man; by arising from the dead, He proved Himself God. Hence it is that we adore Him; hence it is that we sing with our whole hearts "Alleluia! Alleluia!" And hence it is, in fine, that we fear not to give our life for Him!" This bold confession of faith, supported by such logical reasoning, attracted general admiration; but the governor, ashamed of being overcome by a weak woman, made her undergo the most frightful torments; then, seeing that St. Margaret was nowise shaken, he caused her to be beheaded. - GODESCARD, Vies des Saints, 20th July. (St Margaret)

123. Earth from the Holy Sepulchre. - The piety of the pilgrims, who, for more than eighteen hundred years, (and now more) have visited the scenes of Our Lord's mortal life, goes often so far as to carry away some earth or to break off fragments of wood or stone, in those sacred places. St. Augustine himself relates a splendid miracle wrought in his time by a little of this dust taken from the tomb of Jesus Christ, and, consequently, from the place where He came forth glorious by His resurrection. A man of quality, named Hesperius, had the great affliction of seeing his house become a den of devils; things sufficient to make the hair of one's head stand on end, were of ordinary occurrence there, and all through the malice of Satan, who was, doubtless, enraged because he could not reckon Hesperius amongst his servants. One of his friends, who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem gave him a little earth taken from the Holy Sepulchre; Hesperius placed it in one of his apartments, had Mass celebrated in the apartment, and failed not to experience the efficacy of his prayers. This miracle was much talked of in the neighbourhood; St. Augustine heard of it, and wished to see, with his own eyes, this bewitched house, as it was called. Hesperius begged the holy bishop to permit him to build a chapel in the place, which was granted. Scarcely was the edifice completed, when a paralytic young man, being brought thither, was immediately cured. This new miracle proved that God was well pleased with what had been done. - LASSAUSE, Explication du Catechisme de L'Empire, (Explanation of the Catechism of the Empire) 94.

124. A Battle Gained by an Alleluia. - The word Alleluia is a cry of triumph; it denotes the victory which Our Lord gained over Death by His resurrection. We find in the life of St. Germain of Auxerre the story of another victory gained by this same cry; it will interest you, I know, my young friends, so I will tell it to you. St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre, and St. Loup, bishop of Troyes, had gone to Great Britain, or to that part now known as England, to combat heresies that were disturbing the peace of the Church. Whilst they were there the inhabitants were attacked by the pagan Picts and Scots. The Britons had recourse to the two Saints, and besought them to accompany their army, in order that the combat might be favourable to them. It being Easter time, St. Germain had a sort of chapel made in the midst of the camp, of branches of trees interlaced, and the Catechumens who had been prepared for Baptism were there solemnly baptized. After the festival the little army of Christians set forward on its journey, having at its head St. Germain, who had once been a brave and skilful military leader. He recommended his soldiers for the time being to observe the best possible order, and as soon as they saw the hostile army arrive to repeat with all their strength the word they should hear him say. No sooner were the Picts and Scots in sight, than the holy bishop began to cry out Alleluia, and immediately his men repeated as loud as they could shout, Alleluia! Alleluia! The echoes of the mountains repeated the cry with a thundering sound. Nothing more was wanting to frighten the barbarians, who instantly fled in wild disorder ; many of them were even drowned in their haste to cross the river. Thus did St. Germain gain the victory without the shedding of a drop of blood. - GODESCARD, Vies des Saints, 26th July. (St Germain d'Auxerre)

125. A Rival of Christ Risen. - Of all the miracles wrought by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the most stupendous, the most difficult of all, if I may so express myself, is that of His own resurrection. Jesus, Christ raises Himself, He is, therefore, God; there is no possibility of doubting it for a moment. Even the impious and unbelieving have had to admit that. The most curious story with which I am acquainted on this subject is that of the famous inventor of a new religion which he endeavoured to substitute for Catholicity after the French Revolution of 1793. He was called La Reveillere-Lepeaux, and gave to his new religion the name of Theophilanthropy, that is to say, love of God and men. Notwithstanding the fine ideas suggested by this silly name, and the money spent

profusely in buying over people to the new belief, the Theophilanthropists made no great progress. La Reveillere-Lepeaux complained, I believe, to Barras, one of the most famous revolutionaries of that dismal time, that his sectaries did not seem to increase in numbers, whereas the disciples of Jesus Christ were so faithful to their Master, who nevertheless, imposed upon them only privations. "Well! as for me, I do not wonder," replied Barras laughing, "and I can give you a piece of good advice on this head." - "What is that, citizen?" asked the new high-priest. "Here it is: have yourself killed on Friday, let them bury you on Saturday, try your best to rise on Sunday morning; and, take my word for it, people will immediately believe in your new religion." La Reveillere did not choose to follow this advice, as you may well suppose, and now both himself and his sect are quite forgotten. - CLAUDIUS HEBRARD, Journal des bons Exemples, 5th year, 43.
