
Easter Sunday 2013

St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat

There's a painting in an old church in the city of Constantinople. It's a painting of the risen Christ. He's wearing a robe of gold. He stands with feet apart and arms reaching out to right and left. To each side of Christ there is a tomb with the lid off. Rising from the tomb on one side is a man dressed in white. Rising from the other is a woman dressed in red. They're reaching out towards the figure of Christ in the centre.

It's an image of the risen Christ raising Adam and Eve from the grave.

There's great power in the painting. Christ is standing with feet apart – like a weight-lifter. And he's holding on to Adam and Eve with a powerful grip. He's not holding them by their hands. He's holding them by their wrists. He needs an extra strong grip to raise their weight because it's a dead weight. It's the weight of death itself.

The powerful risen Christ powerfully raising Adam and Eve from the dead.

That painting says in images what the Easter song, the Exsultet, says in words and music: "This is the day when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave."

We believe that the same Jesus Christ is with us as we gather for this Easter Mass. He himself has broken the chains of death and he has power to break the chains of death for us as well. He himself is risen from the dead and he has power to raise us too.

May the power of Christ be with us all this Easter – to lift our hearts in the face of any burden we might be carrying at this moment. May the power of Christ be with us to bring us the peace and joy of God.

Bishop Paul Bird CSSR