

Homily for February 27<sup>th</sup> 2020  
 Thursday after Ash Wednesday.  
**“The Deeper Magic”**

In a story that captures the meaning of the Cross with eloquence and literary genius, C.S. Lewis' *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* puts into the mouth of Aslan a speech that declares the crucifixion and resurrection as the most important events in world history. Aslan represents Jesus in the story. At the climax of the narrative, Aslan has taken the place of the boy Edmond and will die for him. For you see, Edmond, had come under the spell of the White Witch, who lured Edmond into her evil castle with magical Turkish Delight. Her intent was to use Edmond as the informer who would lead the witch to Edmond's two sisters, Susan and Lucy and to his older brother Peter. Her design was to have Edmond betray his siblings so she could kill the four of them and thereby secure her reign in Narnia. In the end Edmond's conscience gets the better of him and rather than betraying his siblings, he betrays the witch. Little did Edmond know that in Narnia such a betrayal played into a deep magic, which meant that now Edmond's life was forfeited and the witch could sacrifice him.

Enter Aslan, who knowing that the sacrifice has to be enacted because you can't ignore the magic of Narnia, takes the place of Edmond and dies for him. Now the Witch thinks she has won the ultimate victory, the defeat of the great lion Aslan. Narnia would now be hers, forever!

But little did the witch know of the deeper magic. Aslan suffers the most ignominious death but then rises from the dead. Edmond's sisters witness both Aslan's sacrifice and rising and are there to hear him explain the deeper magic.

*It means that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards.*

This deeper magic is what we are constantly presented with when we look at the crucifix. For here is represented what we then have presented to us sacramentally in the Eucharist. In the Body and Blood of our Lord we join ourselves sacramentally with the Lord Jesus Christ. We therefore eat of that food and drink the cordial which is the antidote to the witch's poisonous Turkish Delight. A delight ingested by people today under many guises.

We live in a world where so many have come under the witch's spell, and in the words of our first reading, have chosen the way of death. Such a way says Moses is the result of people's hearts turning away from God and their being deaf to his words. As a result they are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, just as Edmond served the witch.

However if we are aware of the deeper magic of the Cross we will reject the seduction of the world and hear Jesus say to us:

***“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.***

Those who choose the way of the deeper magic and daily take up their Cross will say Amen to the Lord’s appeal expressed through Moses.

***<sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.***

Lent is the season for us to remember the deeper magic of the Cross, to choose the Cross daily and therefore the life that no toxic candy can destroy.