

CREDIBLE WITNESSES OF HIS RESURRECTION

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EASTER COMMUNITIES



Once again the Lord gives us a great opportunity to experience this time of Easter in the light of the Resurrection. A time of grace in which we are called to allow ourselves to be recreated by the Spirit and by the presence of the Risen Christ in our midst. The Gospels of every day, will enlighten and inspire us for this experience of Easter, leading inevitably to an encounter with the Risen Christ.

One of the first Gospel accounts of the resurrection, speaks of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen One. At first she is looking for a Jesus who is dead, "*Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for? ...*" (Jn 20.15 to 18). Mary was looking for the Jesus whom she knew and whom she had followed for three years. Mary spoke to Jesus without recognizing him, she continued looking for a Jesus of the past, the one from three days earlier. It is the image of a Jesus from the past, which prevents her from recognizing the risen Jesus present in front of her. How often does Jesus stand before us and repeats the same question: *For whom are you looking?* And how often just like Mary Magdalene, we are unable to recognize him.

Jesus accompanies the process of the faith of Mary Magdalene and says to her. "*Mary*" when she hears her name, she opens her ears and discovers the master: "*Rabboni*". This is the moment when Jesus entrusts her with the beautiful mission of being the first witness of the resurrection, before the other disciples: "*Go, go and tell my brothers ...*" and it is also the moment of the joyful response of Mary Magdalene "*I have seen the Lord ...*" Maybe we have come accustomed to thinking that the resurrection is a reality that awaits us after death and we lose sight that the resurrection is to enter "more" into life, it is to accept the invitation of Jesus to rise every day in Him and with Him, and from this experience to be sent out to proclaim the Gospel with joy.

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The Church, through the Pope Francis, is constantly calling us to live our consecration from joy, "the beauty of consecrated life is joy", and joy is a clear sign of the Resurrection. Our congregation, through the decisions of the 35th General Chapter, also makes us a strong call to "choose life"; in Paschal terms we would say, to live with a heart and a resurrected spirit, and be communities transformed by the power of the Spirit.

In several Easter gospel accounts, we can see that the risen Jesus appeared to the assembled community and it is in the community where the disciples experienced the strength that caused them to go out and proclaim the risen Jesus. It would be good to ask ourselves, are our communities, "Easter communities"? What attitudes do we have that speak of and give witness to the resurrection?

Also at some point in our personal and community life, we can hear these strong words: "*Why seek among the dead the one who is alive*"? (Luke 24.5). We can also be looking for Jesus among the dead, where we will never find him because He is alive in our midst. He did not end on the cross but in the Resurrection. Our faith is not only about Good Friday, but above all about Easter Sunday.

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It is not surprising that in our communities, we often find ourselves looking for death instead of seeking and "choosing life" spending ourselves and fretting on what does not give us life or takes it from us. Our SSCC vocation and mission calls us to be paschal communities, able to choose life at all times despite the difficulties of the way.

A life that is not to stay within ourselves, but to be surrendered in proclaiming the risen one, as Mary Magdalene did.

Our Constitutions tell us, "*aware of the power of evil that opposes the Father's love and disfigures his design for the world, we wish to identify with the attitude of Jesus and with his reparative work. Our reparation is communion with Him ... and makes us participate in the mission of the Risen Christ*" (Const. 4). Our charism of reparation has much to contribute to our world today, where hatred, violence, destruction and death, have become everyday news.

During this time, we are invited to review our presences and works, where we will have the opportunity to discover how we are participating in the reparative mission of the Risen Christ, both within the community and in service to the mission.

In the process we are experiencing, one of our challenges is to recreate and revitalize the life of our communities. It is in the community where we discover the presence of the risen Jesus, "*where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them*" (Mt 18:20). It is the community that receives the mission of proclaiming the Good News; the most important task of the community, is to make visible the love of God "*which alone fully repairs, liberates and reconciles*" (Const. 57). If we really want to identify with the reparative attitude and work of Jesus, we need to make our communities, human and humanizing communities, atoners and restorers, revivers who are brought back to life. Communities determined to pass from death to life, in everyday life.

Our communities are not always paschal communities, because sometimes we do not accept to die to our fears, sadness, distrust, selfishness, doubt, despair ... to rise to peace, forgiveness, faith, hope, joy, love ...

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We need to ask the Lord to teach us to trust more in His love and fidelity than in our strength, to accompany us on the road so as not to fear the fatigue, to guide us with his light, to discover the way, to free us, to heal and restore us with his love.

We need to ask Jesus who invites us to leave the spaces where we are safe, because He wants us up and running, to go to Galilee where the human heart needs reparation, "*Go to Galilee; there they will see me*" (Mt 28.10); as the Pope Francis says, "*return to Galilee, to the incandescent point where the grace of God touched me at the beginning of the road. With that spark I can light the fire for today, for each day, and bring warmth and light to my brothers and sisters. With that spark a humble joy, a joy that does not offend pain and despair, a good and peaceful joy is lit*".

Let us welcome the grace of the Resurrection of Christ and let his transforming power, make our lives and our communities credible witnesses of his resurrection.