

Easter Sunday

Lumen Christi! The light of Christ! These are the words that the Church makes resound in our ears at the start of the Easter Vigil, which begins in the darkness of the night.

Lumen Christi! This is repeated three times, while the candles of those participating in the liturgical celebration are being lit. The light of Christ opens up a path through the darkness of sin and death. Jesus has risen! This is the joyful message that we will soon receive once again.

Over the past days we have been meditating on Jesus' total self-giving for us, from the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper to his death on the Cross.

Now we see that the darkness of Calvary is not the final word. The holy women, who had the strength to accompany our Lord in his Passion, lead the way towards the light of the Resurrection. Jesus rewards the love that moved them to want to embalm his Body, and makes them the first bearers of the joy of Easter.

The news of the Resurrection offers us, like the holy women, new light for our lives during this time, which is so painful for all humanity. Saint Paul reminds the Romans that we Christians are united to our Lord's death "so that, just as Christ was raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (*Rom 6:4*).

Easter announces to us that we are not tied down by our past sins, by the weight of our previous mistakes. Nor are we tied down by the limitations we can see in our lives, or by situations, however difficult, like those of the present time. And so the Apostle repeats again: "Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (*Rom 6:11*).

As we commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus, we want to respond to this invitation of our Lord to "walk in newness of life."

But what newness are we talking about? The rhythm of our lives is marked by the same things repeated over and over again: the same work, the same places, the same people. Perhaps we have noticed this even more clearly at this time, if we have been obliged to remain at home because of the pandemic.

What is the sense of newness that Easter brings? It is the light of faith that illumines our lives, and that is enlivened by charity and sustained by hope.

As Saint Josemaria said: “This certainty which the faith gives enables us to look at everything in a new light. And everything, while remaining exactly the same becomes different, because it is an expression of God’s love.”¹

Yes, by faith we know that Jesus is walking at our side in our daily life, revealing to us its true meaning and value. Faith leads us to find Jesus waiting for us, perhaps in a request by someone in our family, or in a favor we can do for a neighbor, or in a call to someone who is feeling lonely...

Through faith we know that work done for love is always valuable, because it becomes an offering to our Father, God. Perhaps right now we realize that so many things are beyond our control, and that we cannot rely on our own strength alone to achieve our goals. Perhaps a temptation to discouragement is beginning to creep in.

Remembering that the Risen Jesus is at our side will help us as we are struggling to work in trying circumstances, thinking of our family and the whole world. If we are working with Christ, all our efforts are meaningful, even when we do not achieve the results we were hoping for, because the echo of the deeds we do for love always reaches Heaven.

After announcing the news of Jesus’ Resurrection to the holy women, the angel adds: “But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you” (*Mk* 16:7). The disciples are to return to Galilee, to the place where everything began, to the land through which they had daily travelled with the Master during the years of his preaching.

The same call is addressed to us: to go back to our Galilee, to our daily life, but bringing to it the light and the joy of Easter.

Pope Francis reminded us of this a few years ago: “To return to Galilee means above all to return to that blazing light with which God’s grace touched me at the start of the journey. From that flame I can light a fire for today and every day, and bring heat and light to my brothers and sisters.”² How much it helps us, in difficult moments, to remember the times when our Lord made his presence felt in our lives, and to renew our trust in Him.

Let us accept our Lord’s invitation. Let us often consider the meaning of the joy of Easter – a joy that is compatible with suffering. And let us receive the light He wants to give us and share it with those around us.

Like the holy women, let us announce joyfully the truth that Christ is alive. And may that conviction be reflected in our lives: in the serenity, the hope and the charity with which we

¹ *Christ is Passing By*, no. 144.

² Pope Francis, Homily at the Easter Vigil, 19 April 2014.

want to imbue each of our days. To do so, let us turn to our Lady's intercession. On the day of the Resurrection we see her radiant with joy at her Son's return. That moment will also arrive for each of us, and by God's power, if we are faithful, we will live forever in Christ Jesus.