

EASTER LIGHT: A SIGN OF HOPE FOR HUMANITY

Dear brothers and sisters

The mystery of the Holy Week, the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord is laid opened before us.

The Paschal Mystery is the life of the Church, because the Risen Christ is our life. Life without end that flows not only from the proclamation of the Good News, but above all from the power of the Holy Spirit, who continues to work in the Church and to produce fruits of conversion through the Word and fruits of transformation, through the sacraments.

The Life of the Risen Lord is our life, our only hope, the dazzling light that reveals to us the infinite love of the merciful God. He is the fountain of living water that was promised to the Samaritan woman which quenches our thirst and purifies us from our sins. She represents not just a clan or nation but the whole humanity and each one of us, who desire life and true happiness (cf. Jn 4:5-42). To her and us Christ promises eternal life as the gift of living water that would flow from his pierced side on the Cross. Like her, we are called to recognize in an ever-new way our thirst, the inexhaustible desire to draw closer to that source and the need to quench our thirst. "Give me this water" (Jn 4:5-15): Sitting at the well and relating our personal life stories to Jesus, it is God himself who urges us to address this prayer unceasingly to him.

Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, illuminates our gaze and enables us recognize in the poverty of Christ the great treasure given to us. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: though he was rich, he became poor for your sake, so that you might become rich through his poverty" (2 Cor 8:9). The profound poverty of Christ is manifested in the appalling sadness of Gethsemane and total abandonment on the Cross. As we contemplate on this mystery, we realize that His poverty is for our priceless treasure and His death is our salvation.

There was no meaning in death and pain, only a comfortable life had meaning for us. His passion, death and resurrection have given new perspective to our lives, to our death, pain

suffering we have to endure. Because the darkness fades away in the dawn of the resurrection, which illuminates the horizon of every existence. Thus, death, the end of life, is a challenge that we are not able to face with our strength alone. It is a tormenting question to which our human reasoning cannot find an answer. Is it simply an end? Christ's resurrection gives a definitive answer, we have been redeemed by the Blood of Christ.

By his obedience Christ has given meaning to death; his filial and divine obedience to the Father has filled death with meaning, not only to his life and mission, but also that of us. "He humbled himself, making himself obedient to the point of death, and to a death on a cross. For this reason, God exalted him..." (Phil 2:8-9). Therefore, we the followers of Christ find the fulness of life only in His obedience and compassion.

St. Peter in his letter exhorts us to consider, "...not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, have you been redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet 1:18-19). The image of the lamb evokes the delicate fragility of the promised Messiah which Isaiah expresses most effectively:

"Mistreated, he allowed himself to be humiliated and did not open his mouth; he was like a lamb led to the slaughterhouse, like a sheep dumb before its shearers, and he did not open his mouth. With oppression and unjust judgment, he was taken out of the way; who grieves over his fate?" (Is. 7:53). But at the same time the figure of the lamb refers immediately and with great realism to the paschal lamb, the immolated lamb, whose blood obtained salvation for the firstborn of the Jews (cf. Ex 12:1-14:19-30).

What does this mean for us? Naturally, for a slave, the greatest gift is his freedom, to be released from every bondage in order to embark a new life. So is also for us, we who are slaves of sin, the greatest gift is redemption, to be saved from the darkness and the chains of evil by the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb of God who came to give us new life.

Christ humbled himself to the point of cruel death on the cross, but the Lord of life, the creator of the universe, could not remain prisoner of the tomb. In his death was present the power of infinite love that offers new life to all who believes in him. Only by

contemplating on the mystery of Christ's death, we discover His saving power of his love. The profound meaning of Christ's death is hidden in God's love for humanity, for each one of us. Discovering this love means opening our hearts to the life that comes from Christ. Easter is the feast of Christ risen from the dead and is pressing invitation for all of us to renew our faith, through prayer and participation in the sacraments.

We all need to encounter the living Christ, to allow ourselves to be filled by his grace and to be open to the action of the Spirit working within us. The women that stood near the Cross of Jesus with Mother Mary and St. John the evangelist were deeply touched by the painful experience of the crucifixion. It was not possible for them to participate in the event of the Cross without transformation of the frailties of their humanness.

Only through the cross, the encounter with the poverty of Christ, who suffered as a man, God gave us new life of faith and hope. He overturned the stone and the empty tomb; on the first day of the week, for the women who came to the tomb, even when they were still in dark (cf. Jn 20:1). God also manifest His living presence for us by removing all that obscure our faith.

While contemplating on the Paschal Mysteries, all of us are invited to renew our relationship with Jesus, the Risen Lord who dwells in our hearts. Let us allow the Risen Christ to speak to us, let us be filled by his love, let us allow his splendor to penetrate the core of our existence, so that we may become his true disciples, witnesses of his resurrection and his divinity.

In the small group of faithful at the foot of the cross, the evangelist Saint John already sees the new community of Believers (Jn 19:25-27). Together with the Virgin Mary, they now form the Church, born of Christ's passion and resurrection. The living Christ will show them the signs of his passion and in the loving presence of the Risen Lord their despair will be transformed into endless joy.

It is the light of the Risen Lord that illumines the path of the Universal Church, and of our Church. The journey that continues on this path through ordinary activities, but with renewed enthusiasm in life. In particular, as we are engaged in the synodal process which

is the privileged way that is offered to us - religious and laity to undertake profound reflection on the future of the Church. It is important to understand more deeply the circumstances and the context in which we are called to live our Christian commitment, asking in prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us to listen and discern the will the Father. The hope is that this journey will generate abundant fruit in the Church, in order to undertake new paths of evangelization and Christian witness in the present realities of the world.

I thank everyone for your generous participation and valuable contribution to the initiatives that have been proposed. **I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to the synodal meeting that will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at San Polycarp Church.** In the joy of Easter, it will be a day of sharing and participation, expressing our desire to walk together in the light of the risen Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, friends, priests, consecrated men and women, I thank you for your every initiative and gesture of witnessing to the living presence of Christ and every moment of your life given to the Lord. I thank you for your gratuitous gesture of service, done out of love for the Church, which is the Body of the Risen Christ. May the Lord bless you and fill your life with His grace.

The Lord is Risen, may our lives be enlightened by his presence. May the Lord bless you and give you his peace, especially in the difficulties and sufferings of each day. Happy Easter!

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+ Martin Kmetec

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