

Rome, Easter, 2021

*Dearest Brothers and Sisters of the OCDS,*

In these days, we celebrate the central Mystery of the Christian Faith: The Paschal Mystery. In the events of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus, we find God's salvific plan: The Cross is the expression of the endless love gifted by Jesus in his existence for others; He, in each encounter with each person manifests the infinite and eternal Love of the Father; at the same time Resurrection, manifests that the Love of God effects only abundant life (cf. John 10,10). Furthermore: "the fact that 'the crucifix is resurrected' (Mark 16,6) demonstrates that the Love with which the Son has gifted Himself is capable of opening unlimited horizons of life for the human beings of all time. (M. de Santis, *Il Risorto*, 16); it is the Event for excellence in the history of all of humanity which both confirms and frightens, just as it had filled the women at the tomb who with surprising wonder wanted to anoint His Body: at their arrival the sun had already risen, and the stone had already been rolled back: The Resurrected had preceded them!



And so, to celebrate Easter is significant in the realization that "the Resurrection had not cancelled out the Passion", but it had assumed it while transfiguring it into new meaning. The Cross expresses the summit of the earthly Jesus's life dedicated to love and service; a once afflicted face now appears in luminous splendour. (id., p.24). Therefore, it is not remaining fixated next to the open tomb, with regrets, that we find Jesus, but rather in the life of Faith that He professed, and that is put into motion behind His steps until the very end; that very Faith confessed by the Roman centurion at the foot of the cross: "Truly, this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15,39; cf.1,1).

The Resurrected, with His Word, invites us to follow Him wherever: "go, speak..." (Mark 16,7), He precedes us in Galilee. From this moment, the mission is now the place of encounter with the Resurrected Christ. His invisible Presence as the faithful and eternal Good Shepherd, filling the eternity of time while encompassing all aspects of time and place; where we are to be fearless in our walk through the dark valleys of history; and where He invites us to accept His victorious and eternal love. He invites us to follow His Way committed to the creation of His Kingdom.

With sincere wishes of a Holy Easter of the Resurrection, in which Christ leaves us "totally clothed in beauty and dignity" (Spiritual Canticle 5,4), I wish that the paschal joy and peace of the Resurrected reaches wherever you may be and that it remain in the heart of each and everyone of you.

*Fraternally,*

Fr. Alzinir Francisco Debastiani OCD