



The Holy See

**URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
EASTER SUNDAY 1979**

Easter, 15 April 1979

1. *Resurrexit tertia die...*

The third day he rose again...

Today, together with the whole Church, we repeat these words with particular emotion. We repeat them with the same faith with which—on this very day—they were said for the first time. We say them with the same certainty that the eye-witnesses of the events put into this phrase. Our faith comes from their testimony, and that testimony sprang from seeing, hearing, meeting face to face, touching the pierced hands, feet and side.

The witness sprang from the Fact; yes, on the third day Christ rose again.

Today we repeat these words with all simplicity, because they come from people of simplicity. They come from hearts that love, and that have so loved Christ as to be capable of passing on and preaching nothing else but the truth about him:

Crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato

passus et sepultus est.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,
died and was buried.

Thus sound the words of this testimony. And with the same *simplicity of truth* they continue to proclaim:

et resurrexit tertia die.

The third day he rose again

This truth, upon which as upon the "cornerstone" (cf. Eph 2:20) the whole edifice of our faith is based—today we wish once more to share this faith among us, one with another, as the fullness of the Gospel. We confessors of Christ, we Christians, we the Church. And, at the same time, we wish to share it with all those who are listening to us, with all men and women of good will.

We share it joyfully, for how could we not be filled with joy for the victory of Life over Death?

Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando!

Dux vitae, mortuus, regnat vivus!

The Lord of life was dead;
but now he is alive and triumphs
(Easter Sequence).

2. How could we fail to rejoice *at the victory* of this Christ, who passed through the world doing good to everyone (cf. Acts 10:38) and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (cf. Mt 4:24), in which is expressed the fullness of the redemptive goodness of God? In it man has been called to the highest dignity.

How can we fail to rejoice *at the victory* of him who was so unjustly condemned to the most terrible passion and death on the Cross; *at the victory* of him who first was scourged, buffeted, spat upon, with such inhuman cruelty?

How can we fail to rejoice *at the revelation of the power of God alone and at the victory of this power* over sin and human blindness?

How can we fail to rejoice *at the victory* definitively won by *good over evil*?

This is the day that the Lord has made!

This is the day of universal hope. The day on which there gather about the Risen One, and join with him, all human sufferings, disappointments, humiliations, crosses, human dignity violated, human life not respected, oppression, repression, all the things that cry aloud:

Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani

To the paschal victim let there rise today the sacrifice of praise!

The Risen One does not go away from us; the Risen One comes back to us.

"But you must go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you...'" (Mk 16:7). He comes everywhere, where people most await him, where sadness and fear are greatest, where misfortune and tears are greatest. He comes to shed the light of the Resurrection upon everything that is subjected to the darkness of sin and death.

3. As he enters the Upper Room though the doors were shut, the Risen Christ greets his disciples gathered there with the words:

"Peace be with you" (Jn 20:20).

These are the first words of his Easter message.

How great is the good in this peace that he gives us, and that the world cannot give (cf. Jn 14: 27). How closely it is linked with his coming and his mission!

How necessary for the world is his presence, the victory of his Spirit, the order coming from his commandment of love, so that men and women, families, nations, continents may enjoy peace.

Today, this greeting of the Risen One, expressed to the apostles in the Upper Room in Jerusalem—we wish to repeat this greeting from this place, and address it to wherever it is particularly relevant and particularly awaited.

Peace to you, peoples of the Middle East.

Peace to you, peoples of Africa.

Peace to you, peoples and countries of distant Asia.

Peace to you, brothers and sisters of Latin America.

Peace to you, peoples who live in the various social, economic and political systems!

Peace! As the fruit of fundamental order; as the expression of respect for every human being's right to life, to truth, freedom, justice and love.

Peace of consciences and peace of hearts. This peace cannot be had unless each one of us has the awareness of doing everything in his or her power so that a life worthy of the children of God will be ensured from the first moment of their existence, for all men and women—brothers and sisters of Christ, loved by him even to death. I am thinking at this moment in particular of all those who are suffering for the lack of what is strictly necessary for existence, of all who suffer from hunger, and above all of the little children, who—in their weakness—are the ones who are

specially loved by Christ and to whom is dedicated this year, the International Year of the Child.

May the Risen Christ inspire in all, Christians and non-Christians—sentiments of solidarity and of generous love towards all our brothers and sisters in need.

4. *Surrexit Christus, spes mea!*

Dear brothers and sisters! How eloquent for us is this Day, which speaks with all the truth of our origin. Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone of our whole edifice (cf. Eph 2:20-21). This *stone*, cast aside by the builders, that God has bathed in the light of the Resurrection, is placed at the very foundation of our *faith, our hope and our love*. It is the primary reason of our vocation and of the mission that each one of us receives at Baptism.

Today we wish to rediscover this vocation, to claim this mission for our own once more. We wish to let it be filled once more with the *joy* of the Resurrection. We wish to bring it near to all people, to those who are near and to those who are far off.

Let us share this joy with one another.

Let us share it with the apostles, with the women who were the first to bring the news of the Resurrection.

Let us unite ourselves with Mary.

Regina caeli, laetare!

Man can never lose the hope of the victory of good.

May this day become for us today the beginning of a new hope.