



The Holy See

"URBI ET ORBI" 1997 *Easter Sunday, 30 March 1997* 1. *"Victimae paschali laudes / immolent Christiani ..."*

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;

and Christ, the undefiled,

hath sinners to his Father reconciled".

I speak to you, Christians! I speak to you,

Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants!

I come to you with the marvellous announcement: Christ is risen!

The One whom John the Baptist had indicated

as the Lamb of God (cf. Jn 1:29,36)

has redeemed his flock: *"Agnus redemit oves"*.

Christ has redeemed the whole human flock,

every human being, without exception.

Christ, innocent victim on the cross,

has reconciled us sinners with the Father.

He who was without sin

has brought us sinners back to the Father.

On this great Feast of Easter

we proclaim the reconciliation of humanity with the Father,

through the power of Christ who for us became obedient

unto death: *"Victima paschalis"*.2. *"Mors et vita / duello conflixere mirando ."*

"Death with life contended; combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign".

Let those who struggle against evil,

those who must measure themselves against death,

who strive to defend life and save it from every peril,

let them today pause, pause in wonder.

Behold, today death has been overcome.

The Son of God born of the Virgin,

God from God, Light from Light,

the Son of God of one being with the Father

accepted an ignominious death on the Cross.

On Good Friday he had been laid in the tomb
and behold, today before dawn,
he has rolled away the stone closing the tomb
and has risen by his own power:

"Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus".3. "Dic nobis Maria, / quid vidisti in via? ..."

"Tell us, Mary: say what you saw on the way".

"The tomb the Living did enclose;

the angels there attesting; shroud with grave-clothes resting".

The Resurrection of Christ is confirmed by the witnesses,
by those who at first light on the day after the Sabbath,
today, went to the tomb.

First the women, and after them the Apostles.

The ancient liturgical Sequence

addresses Mary Magdalen

because it was granted to her not only to discover the tomb empty
but also to announce the event to the Apostles.

Peter and John ran to the tomb and found

that what the women were saying was true.⁴ We turn to you, Mary Magdalen,

who, kneeling at the foot of the Cross

kissed the feet of the dying Christ.

Moved by love, you hurried to the tomb

and found it empty;

you were the first to see the Risen Lord and to speak to him.

A converted sinner,

Christ made you in a way equal to the Apostles,

putting on your lips the message of the Resurrection.

Rejoice, Mary of Magdala!

Rejoice, Peter and John!

Rejoice, Apostles one and all!

Rejoice, o Church, for the tomb is empty.

Christ is risen!

Where they had placed him

there are only the linen cloths

and the shroud

in which they had wrapped him on Good Friday.

Proclaim with us and with the whole of humanity:

*"Surrexit Christus spes mea - Surrexit Christus spes nostra!"*⁵. Proclaim with us that Christ is the hope

also of those who see life and the future

threatened by war and hatred,

especially in the heart of Africa.

May the light of Christ guide the leaders of the Nations,

called to direct by their decisions
 harmonious living between different peoples, cultures and religions,
 as in the Holy Land.

May the power of the Risen Christ sustain
 those who work to strengthen peace and democracy,
 often obtained at the cost of great sacrifice,
 as in the Balkans,
 and especially in beloved Albania.

May the love of Christ, victorious over sin and death,
 grant everyone the courage of forgiveness and reconciliation,
 without which there can be no solutions worthy of man:
 our thoughts go in a special way to the people
 who for months have been held hostage in Lima, Peru.

May they finally gain the freedom they ardently long for!⁶ May all our brothers and sisters in the faith
 who, in different parts of the world,
 are victims of restriction or persecution
 be enabled to share in the joy of Easter.

They are unable, alas, to celebrate
 this feast of the Redemption as they would wish.

Let them not give in to discouragement,
 let them not feel abandoned!

Christ is with them, the Church is with them!

Christ is truly risen!

In him, today, we can overcome the forces of evil.

He offers everyone a new life;
 thanks to him, from this moment on,
 each one of us can turn in love to our brothers and sisters
 in openness, in service, in forgiveness.

Yes, in the Risen Jesus,
 everything gains new meaning and value.

7. "*Scimus Christum / surrexisse a mortuis vere*".

"That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know".

The witness of the women and of the Apostles,
 the witness of the Church,
 reaches not only Jerusalem and the hills of Galilee.
 It spreads to every corner of the world.

At the end of the Second Millennium,
 as the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 draws near,
 this witness now re-echoes everywhere:

Christ is risen!

"Scimus Christum / surrexisse a mortuis vere!"

We believe because we know: *scimus*.

And from the depths of this sublime knowledge,
where the word of God and human reason meet,
we invoke You, Christ Crucified and Risen:

"Tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere!"

Amen, Alleluia!

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