Francis' last homily: "Christ has conquered death, he conquers our darkness and he will conquer the shadows of the world"

We are publishing Pope Francis' last homily for Easter Sunday, read by Cardinal Angelo Comastri.

Mary Magdalene, seeing that the stone of the tomb had been rolled away, ran to tell Peter and John. After receiving the shocking news, the two disciples also went out and – as the Gospel says – "the two were running together" (Jn 20:4). The main figures of the Easter narratives all ran! On the one hand, "running" could express the concern that the Lord's body had been taken away; but, on the other hand, the haste of Mary Magdalene, Peter and John expresses the desire, the yearning of the heart, the inner attitude of those who set out to search for Jesus. He, in fact, has risen from the dead and therefore is no longer in the tomb. We must look for him elsewhere.

This is the message of Easter: we must look for him elsewhere. Christ is risen, he is alive! He is no longer a prisoner of death, he is no longer wrapped in the shroud, and therefore we cannot confine him to a fairy tale, we cannot make him a hero of the ancient world, or think of him as a statue in a museum! On the contrary, we must look for him and this is why we cannot remain stationary. We must take action, set out to look for him: look for him in life, look for him in the faces of our brothers and sisters, look for him in everyday business, look for him everywhere except in the tomb.

We must look for him without ceasing. Because if he has risen from the dead, then he is present everywhere, he dwells among us, he hides himself and reveals himself even today in the sisters and brothers we meet along the way, in the most ordinary and unpredictable situations of our lives. He is alive and is with us always, shedding the tears of those who suffer and adding to the beauty of life through the small acts of love carried out by each of us.

For this reason, our Easter faith, which opens us to the encounter with the risen

Lord and prepares us to welcome him into our lives, is anything but a complacent settling into some sort of “religious reassurance”. On the contrary, Easter spurs us to action, to run like Mary Magdalene and the disciples; it invites us to have eyes that can “see beyond”, to perceive Jesus, the one who lives, as the God who reveals himself and makes himself present even today, who speaks to us, goes before us, surprises us. Like Mary Magdalene, every day we can experience losing the Lord, but every day we can also run to look for him again, with the certainty that he will allow himself to be found and will fill us with the light of his resurrection.

Brothers and sisters, this is the greatest hope of our life: we can live this poor, fragile and wounded existence clinging to Christ, because he has conquered death, he conquers our darkness and he will conquer the shadows of the world, to make us live with him in joy, forever. This is the goal towards which we press on, as the Apostle Paul says, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead (cf. Phil 3:12-14). Like Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, we hasten to meet Christ.

The Jubilee invites us to renew the gift of hope within us, to surrender our sufferings and our concerns to hope, to share it with those whom we meet along our journey and to entrust to hope the future of our lives and the destiny of the human family. And so, we cannot settle for the fleeting things of this world or give in to sadness; we must run, filled with joy. Let us run towards Jesus, let us rediscover the inestimable grace of being his friends. Let us allow his Word of life and truth to shine in our life. As the great theologian Henri de Lubac said, “It should be enough to understand this: Christianity is Christ. No, truly, there is nothing else but this. In Christ we have everything” (*Les responsabilités doctrinales des catholiques dans le monde d’aujourd’hui*, Paris 2010, 276).

And this “everything” that is the risen Christ opens our life to hope. He is alive, he still wants to renew our life today. To him, conqueror of sin and death, we want to say:

“Lord, on this feast day we ask you for this gift: that we too may be made new, so as to experience this eternal newness. Cleanse us, O God, from the sad dust of habit, tiredness and indifference; give us the joy of waking every morning with wonder, with eyes ready to see the new colours of this morning, unique and unlike any other. […] Everything is new, Lord, and nothing is the same, nothing is

old” (A. Zarri, *Quasi una preghiera*).

Sisters, brothers, in the wonder of the Easter faith, carrying in our hearts every expectation of peace and liberation, we can say: with You, O Lord, everything is new. With you, everything begins again.

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