

Easter Thursday

4th April 1872

My dear Daughters,

The feast of Easter that we have just celebrated has certainly brought you graces. Why do we not always draw fruit from these solemnities? It is because we do not enter into the spirit of the mysteries that they represent. If we followed them, if we penetrated them more profoundly, we would draw great teachings from them.

Thus, for example, the Gospels of this whole week are magnificent. That of the miraculous catch, besides the meaning that it contains with reference to the Church and to St. Peter, whom we see established as head of the Apostles and of the faithful, and who receives into his boat all Christians, it also has a practical meaning and one very useful for us. We see that Our Lord was on the sea shore. The apostles had been working, had been fishing all night without catching anything. At the command of Jesus, they throw the net to the right side of the boat and pull it out full of big fishes.

For each one of us there is also the night, the winter during which work is not successful, where we cannot take anything, either for others or for ourselves. But we also

know these words of Scripture: “Now the winter is over”¹ – winter passes; life returns.

We are rather inclined to believe that the night is death, that the winter will last for ever, as if, upon seeing the garden a month ago we had said: “These trees are good for nothing; they will never again have leaves. It would have been better to throw them on the fire, never to have planted them.” We are tempted to say this, both about ourselves and about others: “There is nothing more, nothing, everything is dead”. No, Sisters, the moment will come when God will send his strength, his grace and his light.

What we must do is to remain patiently, practising faith, hope and charity. In believing, in hoping, in loving, we acquire merit. See the reproaches that Our Lord makes to the disciples at Emmaus, because they said: “*We had hoped*”². Before, we believed, we hoped, but now! And Our Lord calls them men of little understanding, with hearts slow to believe³. Our Lord does not like that.

On the other hand, look at Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Resurrection: how she searches for our Lord with faith, with trust, with ardour, tenderly and lovingly. She sees the angels, but can the angels do for her? It is Our Lord that she desires. She does not stop even to talk to these heavenly spirits; and so Our Lord recompenses her by

¹ *Iam hiems transiit*

² *Sperabamus*

³ *Stulti et tardi ad credendum* (Lk 24: 25)

appearing to her. Have you ever asked yourselves, Sisters, whether this moment of inexpressible joy, when Our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene, was a moment of merit for her? Certainly not, the time of merit is not that of repayment, and she had been repaid more than enough to have need of merit.

We often think, and we are wrong, that there is no merit for us while we are not being rewarded. Let us never judge by our human feelings: the moment of merit for Mary Magdalene was when she was searching, when she was praying, when she was persevering, when she was being tried. During the Passion she had had great trials to bear; she had seen all the sufferings of Our Lord; she was present when He died, wept by his body in the tomb. Then, the consolation of having his sacred body was taken from her, not knowing who had taken it. It was the same for the disciples at Emmaus. The moment they gained merit was not when they were all afire, listening to Our Lord. It is not too difficult to be all afire when Our Lord is speaking.

For us, Sisters, we will have the merit of work, the merit of struggle, the merit of tears, the merit of faith, the merit of dryness, of deprivation; and if we do not have our reward in this world, as St Teresa says, we will have it in the next.
