



April 20<sup>th</sup> 1879

## MEDITATING THE GOSPELS OF THE RESURRECTION

*Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus*

My dear daughters,

Today I only want to say a few things about the Gospels of the Resurrection. I will give you a few counsels on how to easily meditate on them in a way that will help to draw out a few points which seem important to me. I would advise all those who meditate on these Gospels to transport themselves in their imagination to where the scene took place, to picture the persons who were present, and to place themselves on their knees as if they were there.

The first of these Gospels is the one where we are told of the visit of the holy women to the tomb. They find the stone rolled away. Our Lord's body is no longer there, but in its place are two angels who answer their questions. Remain on your knees before the sepulchre; look, contemplate, adore and love; love above all.

I find that the trait which is most revealed in the Gospels of the Resurrection is the ardour with which each of the persons concerned went directly to Jesus Christ alone with a total disregard for men or angels, for Our Lord was absolutely all that they were seeking. They sought after Him with an ardent faith. The Faith! It seemed to have been extinguished. And yet, although still hidden like a spark in the depths of the hearts of the Apostles, it must have been quite large since they couldn't pay much attention to the Angels, even though "the vision of Angels", says St. Gregory, "rejoices the human soul." But they were seeking only the Lord.

Take Mary Magdalen and the holy women. They find the sepulchre empty, they see the angels; but this doesn't satisfy them, they are only interested in Our Lord. Mary Magdalen remains behind in tears and thus Our Lord comes to console her. Remember that if a soul seeks nothing but Jesus Christ, if she sets out to find Him in all things, and if, no matter what happens to her, she is always ardent in her search for Jesus Christ, in the end, at one moment or another, He comes. "Your tears have touched me", says the Imitation, "your sighs, the desires of your heart."

The trial had been terrible. Think back to the darkness of Calvary, the anguish of the crucifixion, taking the body down from the Cross, the tomb. Imagine these poor women, coming with perfumed oils to embalm the dead body of one they loved! The divinity remained united with this body, but He had truly died. And see how throughout the trial they sought Him with so much ardour, fidelity and love.

Now let's look at the Gospel of St. Peter. If we truly stay there on our knees before the tomb we will see the Apostles coming at a run. When the news was announced to them, they ran, but he

who loved the most was the quickest. St. John, who was younger, arrived first, but he didn't dare enter the sepulchre. Peter went in: he represents the power of the Church, the King of the Heavenly City after Our Lord; it is he who was given the keys and who opens the door for us. Although old, he runs with so much love and he goes into the sepulchre, with so much power, because it is he who must open and proclaim to all men the mysteries of the death and life of Our Lord; he who, having been confirmed, must confirm his brothers.

It is the moment to ask him to come and confirm us in the Faith. We have faith, but we can always be confirmed in a greater Faith, in a greater Apostolic spirit and in a love of Jesus Christ which is even stronger. All these graces are in the hands of St. Peter. Think of him often and pray to him.

Let us kneel now by the lake of Genesareth at the moment of the miraculous catch of fish. Our Lord asks the disciples: "Children, haven't you anything to eat?" And they reply: "We have been working all night and have caught nothing." Notice what a laborious life the Apostles led, how poor they were. Then Our Lord said: "Cast the net to the right." They did and made the miraculous catch, a figure of what St. Peter would be doing later, he who was called "Fisher of men." St. John said to Peter: "It is the Lord." Notice that John recognized His Master right away by means of certain lights that belong to the Contemplative State. St. Peter in his ardor and strength didn't even put on his tunic but dove into the water to go and throw himself at the Lord's feet.

There is a mystery here. St. Jeanne de Chantal said somewhere: "There are people who are always turning around themselves and spending their time making sure that their appearance is what it should be, before going to the Spouse." There are those in the Religious Life who spend their time checking if they are advancing, if they are saints, at what degree they have arrived; they are always looking at themselves and the beauty they think they have acquired; but the one who truly loves always goes straight to Our Lord like St. Peter, who, who, on the words of Saint John, put on his only tunic – "erat enim nudus" - and without thinking about how he would look before our Lord, hurried to Him with all ardor.

Venerate what is in the heart of St. Peter, a profound contrition and humility which is the foundation of love. Peter had always loved Our Lord, but his feeling of contrition made his love more tender and earnest. What a consolation it is for those who reproach themselves for faults of the past and have feared to go to Him, to find that the more Peter felt miserable, the more he was pardoned and then the more he threw himself with an ardor that couldn't be stopped, to embrace the feet of Our Lord before all the others.

Try to meditate the Gospel in this way, keeping yourself on your knees before the scene, watching, contemplating, adoring. It doesn't have to be only Our Lord whom you see, although it is towards Him that the attention of the soul is fixed, but look also at the models who are between you and Him. Mary Magdalen is one model, St. John another. St. Peter, the disciples of Emmaus, and all the others, are models for you in the various states of your soul. You can learn from them how to have a great fervour, a great fidelity and a great desire to receive the Holy Spirit. This is something else that is very striking: it wouldn't be until Pentecost that the Apostles would receive the fullness of the Spirit, but in the Gospels of the Resurrection we see that Our Lord was already

saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit." He breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit, he whose sins you forgive are forgiven... As My Father has sent Me, so do I send you."

I would like to draw from this one other conclusion. We received the Holy Spirit when we were confirmed; but we still need other outpourings of the Spirit! How much more so in order to have an Apostolic spirit and to walk forward in life along the path Our Lord walked, in the midst of contradictions, of persecutions, of all the difficult and painful circumstances that marked the life of Our Lord: in order to imitate Him, poor, humiliated, discredited, insulted, unrecognised by His own and giving Himself to constant work, for it is truly such a life that Our Lord lived.

We must receive the Holy Spirit and have it at heart to live as Our Lord lived; that is to say, that rather than dreaming of a state where we would have peace, joy, happiness and the absence of contradictions and difficulties, we would expect to find in this life poverty, contempt, contradictions, difficulties and suffering, all of which were the companions of Our Lord in this world. We need a great outpouring of the Spirit in order first to understand this, and then the will that desires it, and finally, the strength to be faithful.

There are many more things I could say on this subject. I have only indicated a few, but if you look at the mysteries of the Resurrection and consider what each of the Apostles did, I believe you will find a great deal for practice and you will thus enter a bit further into the Risen Life.

The masters of the Spiritual Life say that the most perfect state of Our Lord's life is the Risen Life. To tend towards this state, which is the highest, is the most difficult but since a little of every state of Our Lord's life must be reproduced in our souls, - there must be something of the Risen Life as well since we always are tending towards the resurrection. When we receive Jesus Christ into our hearts, it is His resurrected Humanity which is communicated to our flesh, it is His glorious Humanity which is placed on our lips in order to enter into the interior of our body"

Let us enter into this spirit of Resurrection: a spirit ever more courageous and strong, a spirit which goes beyond difficulties, not by rejecting them, but rather by recognising in them the price of eternity. To the spirit of the world, contradictions, suffering and difficulties seem to be an obstacle, but to the spirit of eternity, they are ways to perfection; they are the chisel and hammer by which the portrait of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who must be formed in us, is printed and engraved in our heart.