

ON THE RESURRECTION

5th April 1874

My dear Daughters,

The holy days that we have just passed through are in themselves a silent proclamation of the things that we are told, of the remembrance of the great truths that they evoke, of the ceremonies of the Church, of everything which recalls to the soul the sorrowful circumstances that marked the end of the life of Our Lord. The joy which fills the whole Church today has its lesson also. This joy is that of the resurrection and it is true joy because it is eternal. There are two kinds of joys in the life of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin: one which you have known, the other which awaits you.

The first is the joy of the Infancy of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He makes the soul that He is calling to Himself taste this first of all. These are the first fervours, the first attractions, the first consolations through which He makes his secret visit to the soul known, through which He makes it understand and love His beauty. Through these joys, finally, He seems to carry her in His arms, as a mother does her child. There is no one of you, Sisters, who does not have a sweet, profound and precious memory of these hours wherein Our Lord has treated you as the Blessed Virgin treated the Child Jesus or even more as Jesus treated His holy Mother, when she carried Him in her arms and found in Him all the sweetness and the joy of her existence.

At the other end of Our Lord's life is found the joy of the resurrection but we must, my dear Daughters, and this is what the Church teaches us by these mysteries, imitate the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ in its entirety, if we want to arrive with Him to the joys of the resurrection.

Do not turn back then, do not say: "I no longer have the joys I experienced at the start of my spiritual life; I do not yet have the joys that are beyond." Between these two joys, there is the time of trial, of sacrifice, of suffering, of patience, when we must seek Our Lord with great generosity and follow him so that He may become the only light of our mind. And we must be convinced that we have to work to arrive at this stage where we have no other lights but those, which come from faith. He must be the strong and ardent love of our heart, so that we seek Him in all things; and because of Him we love all people, even if we find sacrifices when we come in contact with them. It is, finally, the time during which Jesus Christ must become, as it were, the form of our life, so that, following Him in the Way of patience, we will arrive at the eternal joy that his sufferings have merited for us and which is promised to us in the Paschal Feast.

So for us Holy Week is the road on which we must walk. The joys, the consolations of the infancy are behind us. It is by them that God drew us to Himself; this is the way He withdrew us from the world, that He has manifested His love for us. Only one thing remains for us now from this sweetness, these consolations, this tenderness, the spirit of littleness that is the basis of Christian childhood and which must always accompany us on the way of the Cross.

That, my dear Daughters, must never pass away, whether you are forty, fifty or sixty years old. This basis of childhood must always remain in the soul; for this docility, this humility, this obedience this loving denial of self, this unaffectedness, this uprightness, this simplicity are the characteristics proper to a child and must guide the Christian on the Way of the Cross. But the joys that were there at the beginning are behind, as they were for the Blessed Virgin during the public life of Our Lord and at the hour of the Passion.

Now, Sisters, it is the hour of giving, of practising the Gospel, of living that perfect chastity which the Rule speaks of when it says that after having given ourselves so solemnly to Jesus Christ there is no longer any action, work, or instance of our lives over which he has not a right; that He alone must fill our hearts; that chastity which consists in loving Our Lord alone, in following Him in this life in these times of trials, placing all our affections in Him alone.

You know that the Church recognises that the virtue of faith corresponds to the mystery of the Resurrection, and St. Paul does not hesitate to say: "If Christ has not risen, then our preaching is groundless"¹. Therefore, today's mystery is a great mystery of faith. It makes us wait for the world to come for all the joys that we would like to find here below. It makes us pass through the trials of life and pass through death never finding anything that is not little compared to the weight of eternal glory that is reserved for us. "The temporary, light burden of our hardships is earning for us for ever an utterly incomparable, eternal weight of glory."² Yes, Sisters, the trials of this life are short, they are light; the sadness of this time will pass and soon it will be followed by an unadulterated and endless joy.

So this is what must by our resurrection in union with the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ; but we will only be associated in His glory if we accept to walk with Him in this way of trials which He has been the first to undergo.

Often, without realizing it we act a bit like the Jews. They did not recognize Our Lord because they were waiting for a Messiah who

¹ 1Cor 15:14

² 2Cor 4:17

would triumph over their enemies, a king who would establish His empire over all peoples of the earth. We would equally like to see Our Lord as the unrivalled victor in this world, desiring to see His reign, His empire in the universe established; but He is not like this: the Church - and each of her children pass through tribulations and trials. Religious Orders which are also the children, of the Church, have their tribulations and their trial. In what part of the earth do you find the Church having liberty of action established as she ought to be?

Let us carry that thought in our life among us; nothing is made as we would like it to be. It may be something that does not go well in our employment, in our work, in our schedule, in our number; everything is not organized according to our desires. And why is that? Because it is by means of trials and contradictions and a certain persecution that He makes us walk. For the Church, suffers persecution from her enemies. For us, I don't say that we must suffer the persecution of contradictions but it is in passing these persecutions that we will arrive at eternal peace. We must undoubtedly ask that Our Lord reign here below over hearts, but we cannot expect His reign to be perfect and absolute in this world. This is a thing reserved for eternity. There are things to suffer in this world before we can enter eternity.

The joy of the soul lies above these contradictions, above these trials above these little matters where one can criticize and complain about; the joy of the soul lies in hope that accompanies and guides love, it places itself in this peace of the heart where one begins to enjoy the Risen Jesus Christ of this eternal kingdom where we will see Him glorious one day. Such is the end that we wait for which we must not be impatient for because if we remain longer on earthy we will be able to have a more beautiful resurrection and be able to lead

more souls to enjoy this resurrection with us after they have learned to carry the Cross in this world.

You have without doubt noticed the word of St. Augustine that we had these past days in the Office: "may it please God," he says, "that many souls undergo the same hardships as we do to be saved with us" And he adds, God left the bad ones on earth either so that they may correct themselves or so that through them the just may be tried. Let us strive, my dear Daughters, to fulfil the task confided us. Let us gain many souls for Jesus Christ so that with us they can eternally enjoy Jesus Christ triumphant and resurrected, who already in this world has given us the proof of a resurrected and glorious flesh, in which He nourishes us and which is like the germ of the future resurrection, deposited in us by Holy Communion.