



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

GENERAL AUDIENCE

*Saint Peter's Square
Wednesday, 7 April 2010*

Octave of Easter

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today the customary Wednesday General Audience is bathed in the luminous joy of Easter. In these days, in fact, the Church celebrates the mystery of the Resurrection and experiences the great joy that comes to her from the Good News of Christ's victory over evil and over death. This joy is not only prolonged in the Octave of Easter but is extended for 50 days until Pentecost. After the weeping and distress of Good Friday and after the silence, laden with expectation, of Holy Saturday, here is the wonderful announcement: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (Lk 24: 34). This is the "Good News" par excellence in the entire history of the world, it is the "Gospel" proclaimed and passed on down the centuries, from generation to generation.

Christ's Pasch is the supreme and unequalled act of God's power. It is an absolutely extraordinary event, the most beautiful, ripe fruit of the "Mystery of God". It is so extraordinary that it is ineffable in its dimensions that escape our human capacity for knowing and investigating. Yet, it is also a "historical" event, witnessed to and documented. It is the event on which the whole of our faith is founded. It is the central content in which we believe and the main reason why we believe.

The New Testament does not describe how the Resurrection of Jesus took place. It only mentions

the testimonies of those whom Jesus met personally after he had risen. The three Synoptic Gospels tell us that this announcement: "He has risen!", was first proclaimed by Angels. It is therefore a proclamation that originates in God; but God immediately entrusts it to his "messengers", so that they may pass it on to all. Hence it is these same Angels who tell the women, who had gone at daybreak to the tomb, "go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him" (Mt 28: 7). In this way, through the women of the Gospel, this divine mandate reaches each and every one so that each in turn may transmit this same news to others with faithfulness and courage the glad tidings, that are joyful and convey delight.

Yes, dear friends, our whole faith is founded on the constant and faithful transmission of this "Good News", and today we want to tell God of our deep gratitude for the innumerable hosts of believers in Christ who have gone before us in the course of the centuries, because they never failed in their fundamental mandate to proclaim the Gospel which they had received. The Good News of Easter, therefore, requires the action of enthusiastic and courageous witnesses. Each disciple of Christ, and also each one of us, is called to be a witness. This is the precise, demanding and exalting mandate of the Risen Lord. The "news" of new life in Christ must shine out in the life of Christians, it must be alive and active in those who bring it, really capable of changing hearts and the whole of life. It is alive first of all because Christ himself is its living and life-giving soul. St Mark reminds us, at the end of his Gospel, where he writes that the Apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it" (Mk 16: 20).

The Apostles' experience is also our own and that of every believer, of every disciple who makes himself a "herald". In fact, we too are sure that the Lord works with his witnesses today, as he did in the past. This is a fact we can recognize every time we see the seeds of true and lasting peace sprouting and wherever the work and example of Christians and of people of good will is enlivened by respect for justice, patient dialogue, convinced esteem for others, impartiality and personal and communitarian renunciation. Unfortunately, we also see in the world so much suffering, so much violence, so much misunderstanding. The celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the joyous contemplation of Christ's Resurrection that triumphs over sin and death with the power of God's Love, is a favourable opportunity for rediscovering and professing with greater conviction and trust in the Risen Lord, who accompanies the witnesses of his word, working miracles together with them. We shall be truly and with our whole selves witnesses of the Risen Jesus when we let the wonder of his love shine through us: when in our words, and especially, in our actions, the voice and hand of Jesus himself may be recognized as fully consistent with the Gospel.

Therefore the Lord sends us everywhere as his witnesses. But we can only be such on the basis of and with continuous reference to the Paschal experience, the experience which Mary Magdalene expresses when she announces to the other disciples: "I have seen the Lord" (Jn 20: 18). This personal encounter with the Risen One is the steadfast foundation and central content of

our faith, the fresh and inexhaustible source of our hope, the ardent dynamism of our charity. Thus our Christian life itself will fully coincide with the announcement: "Christ the Lord has risen, indeed". Let us, therefore, allow ourselves to be won over by the fascination of Christ's Resurrection. May the Virgin Mary support us with her protection and help us to savour the Easter joy to the full so that in turn we may bring it to all our brothers and sisters.

Once again, a Happy Easter to you all!

To Special Groups

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer a warm welcome to the newly ordained deacons from the Pontifical Irish College, together with their families and friends. Dear young deacons: may the grace of your ordination conform you ever more fully to the Lord in humble obedience and faithful service to the building up of the Church in your beloved homeland. Upon all the English-speaking visitors present at today's Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, Malta, Croatia, Australia, Japan and the United States, I invoke the joy and peace of the Risen Christ!

I also address a cordial welcome to the Italian-speaking pilgrims, in particular the deacons and seminarians of the Archdiocese of Catania, as well as the deacons of the Society of Jesus who are gathered here with their superiors and relatives. Together with them I greet the *young people* present, especially the teenagers from the Diocese of Cremona, the numerous groups of boys and girls who are making their "profession of faith" this year. They come from various Deaconries, Parishes and Prayer and Recreation Centres of the Archdiocese of Milan. Dear friends, may you always be faithful to your Baptism: live to the full your baptismal consecration and be witnesses of Christ who died and rose for us.

I address an affectionate thought also to you, dear *sick people*: may the light of Easter illuminate you and support you in your suffering. And may you, dear *newlyweds*, draw from the Paschal Mystery the courage to be protagonists in the Church and in society, contributing with your faithful and fertile love to building the civilization of love.

Greeting to the Russian faithful :

I am glad to be able, by courtesy of the Itar-Tass Press Agency, to send a cordial greeting and good wishes to all Russians, both those who live in their homeland and those who dwell in various parts of the world. May the Solemnity of Holy Easter, which this year we had the joy of celebrating together with the Catholics and the Orthodox, be an opportunity for renewed brotherhood and a more and more intense collaboration in truth and in charity.

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