



The Holy See

HOLY MASS FOR THE MEETING OF THE MISSIONARIES OF MERCY WITH THE
POPE *HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS* *Vatican Basilica, Altar of the Chair of Saint
Peter*

Second Tuesday of Easter, 10 April 2018 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

We heard in the Acts of the Apostles: “*And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 4:33).

Everything begins with the Resurrection of Jesus: from it stems the witness of the Apostles and, through this derives the faith and new life of the members of the community, with its straightforward evangelical style.

Today’s Readings for the Mass bring out these two inseparable aspects: *personal rebirth* and *community life*. And so, in addressing you, dear brothers, I am thinking of your ministry which you have been carrying out since the Jubilee of Mercy. A ministry that moves in both of these directions: at the service of people, so that they may be “born anew”, and at the service of communities, so that they may live the commandment of love, with joy and consistency.

In this sense, the Word of God today offers two indications that I would like to offer you, thinking precisely of your mission.

The Gospel reminds us that one called to bear witness to Christ’s Resurrection must *himself, personally, be “born anew”* (cf. Jn 3:7). Otherwise one ends up becoming like Nicodemus who, despite being a teacher in Israel, did not understand Jesus’ words when He said that in order to “see the kingdom of God” one must be “born anew”, be born “of water and the Spirit” (cf. vv. 3-5). Nicodemus did not understand the logic of God, which is the logic of grace, of mercy, whereby one who becomes small is great, one who becomes last is first, one who acknowledges being sick is healed. This means truly leaving primacy to the Father, to Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives. Attention: it is not a question of becoming “obsessed” priests, as if they were depositaries of some extraordinary charism. No. Priests are normal, simple, meek, balanced people, who are capable of allowing themselves to be constantly regenerated by the Spirit, docile to his power, interiorly free

— above all of themselves — because moved by the “wind” of the Spirit that “blows where it wills” (cf. Jn 3:8).

The second indication concerns service to the community: being priests capable of “*lifting up*” in the “*wilderness*” of the world the sign of salvation, that is, the Cross of Christ, as a source of conversion and renewal for the whole community and for the world itself (cf. Jn 3:14-15).

In particular, I would like to stress that the Lord, dead and Risen, is the power that *creates communion* in the Church and, through the Church, in all of humanity. Jesus said it before the Passion: “I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (Jn 12:32). This power of communion was manifested from the beginning in the community of Jerusalem where — as the Acts of the Apostles attests — “the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (4:32). It was a communion that meant practical sharing of goods, so that “they had everything in common” (*ibid.*) and “there was not a needy person among them” (v. 34). But this manner of community life was also “contagious” outside of it: the living presence of the Risen Lord exerts a force of attraction that, through the witness of the Church and through the different forms of proclaiming the Good News, tends to reach everyone, no one excluded. You, dear brothers, also place your specific ministry as Missionaries of Mercy at the service of this dynamism. In fact, both the Church and the world today particularly need Mercy so that the unity willed by God in Christ may prevail over the negative action of the evil one who exploits so many current means, good in themselves, but which, when misused, instead of uniting, divide. We are convinced that “unity is greater than conflict” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 228), but we also know that without Mercy this principle does not have the strength to be put into concrete practice in life and history.

Dear brothers, start afresh from this encounter with the joy of being confirmed in the ministry of Mercy. Confirmed first and foremost in the welcome knowledge that you are the first called to be reborn, always and again “anew”, through God’s love. And at the same time, confirmed in your mission to offer to all the sign of Jesus “lifted up” from the earth, so that the community may be a sign and instrument of unity throughout the world.