

	<p>Retrait of the Priestly Fraternity of Spain</p> <hr/> <p>EASTER 2021</p>
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THE SIGNS OF THE RISEN

April 6, 2021

“9 When they were coming down from the mountain, he ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of man rose from the dead. 10 This stuck with them and they discussed what it meant to rise from the dead ”(Mk 9: 9-10).

□ The resurrection is not so easy to understand. The disciples of Jesus themselves, the apostles, had not understood what Jesus meant when he spoke to them of "resurrection." When they come down from Mount Tabor, after the experience of the transfiguration, which is a foretaste of the resurrection.

Perhaps, we are already familiar with the language and we speak of "resurrection" as a theoretical or theological concept that we link to the person of Jesus. But I am not absolutely convinced that we know how to translate it into our everyday life experience. It may happen to us like the apostles of Jesus, that the message often seems somewhat incomprehensible to us.

- When I speak of "resurrection" what do I mean? What images help me understand and interpret this term?

"Do not be afraid. Are you looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified? He is not here. He has risen. Look where they put it. " (Mk 16.6).

□ Jesus during his life was identified as the Nazarene, for obvious reasons. He shouldn't be a place recognized for anything in particular. It is an anonymous city, which does not appear in the Old Testament. Nathanael himself wonders "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (Jn 1.46).

- Why am I recognizable? What do people who know me identify with?

"The other disciples said to him:" We have seen the Lord. " But he (Thomas) answered them: "If I don't see the mark of the nails in your hands, if I don't put my finger in the hole of the nails and don't put my hand in their side, I don't believe it" (Jn 20, 25).

□ After his death, Jesus changes his identity, he is recognized as "the crucified one". The nail wounds and the spear mark on the side serve to identify the risen with the crucified. It is the same Jesus who walked the roads of Galilee and Judea, the one who touched lepers with his hands, the one who healed the sick and broke bread with his own hands to distribute it to hungry people. Those hands and feet, pierced by the nails at the crucifixion, are the ones that are presented to his disciples in the apparitions as a sign of recognition and identification. The disciple Thomas is the one who asks to see the signs that identify the Risen One with the Jesus that he had known in his public life.

The experience of the resurrection is personal, we can say that subjective, before the same signs one disciple immediately believes and another is perplexed and surprised, it seems that he has not yet taken the step of faith. This is what happens with Peter and John on Easter morning, when they are warned by Mary Magdalene that the tomb is open. Pedro enters first and sees the canvases on the floor and the rolled-up shroud in a

separate place. He is amazed at the absence of the body of Jesus. However, John enters behind and, seeing the same as Peter, he immediately believes that Jesus has risen. The empty tomb and the bandages that had covered Jesus' body speak volumes to him. We each have our own signs, very personal experiences, that have helped us to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. It is true that afterwards we share the faith, with the rest of the believers, but all part of a personal encounter with the Risen One, in signs that speak to us.

- What signs have I discovered in my life, in my personal experience, that have helped me to believe that Jesus is alive, that he has risen conquering death?

□ As with the Risen One, all believers — including us — have our lives marked by signs of resurrection.

The resurrection is an experience in the present, in the today of our life. We should not think that the resurrection is a guarantee of the future, something that will happen only when our pilgrimage through this world ends. Paul, in the letter to the Colossians, speaks of it as an event that has already been verified in us by faith. If you have been raised with Christ... then our life has to show the signs of the resurrection. We cannot live as men without hope.

1) The first sign of the resurrection, which should mark our life, is joy. It is what characterizes the encounter of the Risen One with his disciples. "And the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:20). It is not about a punctual joy, which is limited to that moment of the meeting. This joy must be present and manifest in all moments of our life. Every circumstance, even the most painful, can be lived with the joy that is born in this encounter with the Lord.

Brother Charles also lived this joy and tells us about it:

You are resurrected and you ascend to the heavens! So you are in your glory! You do not suffer anymore, you will not suffer anymore, you are happy and you will be so forever ... My God, how happy I am, because I love you! It is for your sake that I must take care of myself first of all. How not to rejoice, how satisfied I must be! ... My God, you are blessed for eternity, you lack nothing, you are infinitely and eternally happy! I too am happy, my God, because it is You who I love above all. I can tell you that I do not lack anything ... That I am in heaven, that whatever happens and what happens to me, I am happy because of your beatitude.

Resolution. — When we are sad, discouraged about ourselves, about others, about things, let us think that Jesus is glorious, seated at the right hand of the Father, blessed forever, and that if we love him as we should, the joy of the infinite Being it must be infinitely above our souls, the sorrows that come from being exhausted and, consequently, before the vision of joy of God, our soul must be jubilant and the pains that drown it disappear like the clouds before the sun; our God is blessed. Let us rejoice without end, for all the evils of creatures are an atom next to the joy of the Creator! There will always be sadness in our life, there must be, because of the love that we carry and we must carry in ourselves all men; also because of the memory of the pains of Jesus and the love we feel for him; because of the desire that we have to have for justice, that is, for the glory of God and the pain that we must experience seeing injustice and God insulted ... But these pains, however just they are, should not last in our soul, should not be more than passengers; what should last is our ordinary state; it is what we must return to without ceasing; This is the joy of the glory of God, the joy of seeing that now Jesus does not suffer anymore and will not suffer anymore, but that He is happy forever at the right hand of God.

(Notes from a Retreat in Nazareth from November 5 to 15, 1897)

2) The second sign must be faith. The event of the resurrection and the encounter with the Risen One lead us to believe in God. It is He who has raised Jesus from the dead and

raised him from the grave. Faith places us before reality with new eyes, with a deep look. Faith illuminates all reality. All creation, each person, refers us to the Creator. We can find seeds of God's love wherever we look. God is behind each person and everything. For Brother Charles, faith makes our life easier:

How happy we are that we believe! How beautiful, tall and pure is the truth! And how human life becomes clear in the light of faith, it becomes simple!

How can you believe, you who receive your glory from one another, and who do not seek the glory that comes only from God? (Jn 5.44). To believe, you have to humble yourself, you have to make yourself small, you have to confess that you have little spirit, admit a number of things that are not understood, obey the Church's teaching, receive the truth from it, sometimes in a somewhat rude way. , from a sometimes unskillful mouth, submitting the judgment, obeying in spirit ... and believing humiliated, because to believe is to believe that one is a sinner, that he can do nothing by himself, that he abuses every day of a thousand graces, to believe is to have in front of yes a divine ideal and to see how far one is, is to see the goodness of God and our ingratitude ...

(Meditations on the passages relating to the holy gospels. Nazareth, 1897)

3) The third sign is a transformed life. Paul invites us to aspire to the goods above, not those of the earth. "If you have been raised with Christ, seek the goods from above (...); Aspire to what is above, not what is on earth "(Col 3,1). We cannot settle or stay only with material things, or think that only they will give us the happiness we crave. We need the material, no doubt, but we have also been created for the spiritual. The encounter with the Risen Jesus changes our life, gives it depth, depth. He asks that our actions be meaningful and express the centrality of that encounter and that presence in us. It is also Paul who says "I live, but it is not I who lives, it is Christ who lives in me. And my life from now on in the flesh, I live it in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me "(Gal 2:20). We cannot stay in the superficial, we have to go deep inside because there the encounter with God takes place.

Charles de Foucauld refers to his Lord Jesus as the unique Model and tells us:

Let's follow this unique Model; then we will be sure that we are doing the right thing, because we will no longer be the ones who live, but he who lives in us, and our acts are no longer our poor and miserable human acts, but his, divinely effective.

4) And a last sign that I want to highlight is communion, fraternity. Christ is risen and made us members of his body. That unites us in a permanent, irrevocable way. We do not follow the Lord alone, as individuals, but in community. We celebrate faith with our brothers and sisters and that faith leads us to love everyone, also those who do not believe. The resurrection of Jesus will rejoin the disciples who had dispersed. "After eight days, the disciples were inside again and Thomas with them" (Jn 20:26). It is also a source of communion and unity for us, in our fraternities, for our Church and for our world.

Brother Charles is also a teacher of the fraternity, he had a welcoming lifestyle, especially with the poorest and those furthest from the Lord.

The Fraternity is the house of God in which every poor person, every guest, every sick person is always invited, called, desired, welcomed with joy and gratitude by the brothers who love him, who have a tender affection for him and who consider him his I enter under their roof as the entrance of a treasure: they are, in fact, the treasure of treasures, Jesus himself.

The Fraternity is a port, a recovery in which every human being, especially if he is poor or unhappy, is, at any time, fraternally invited, desired and welcomed.

The Fraternity is the roof of the Good Shepherd.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LIFE REVIEW

1. How can I consider the state of joy in my life? At what moments do I experience a growing, greater joy? What realities, events, people make me happy?
2. What elements sustain my faith and give it strength? What realities put my faith in crisis and make it difficult for me to believe?
3. Do I consider my life meaningful? Do I think I reveal the presence of the Risen Lord in me? What elements of my life should change to better express my condition as a disciple of Jesus?
4. Fraternity is one of the fundamental elements of our spirituality: What can I do this Easter to improve my relationship with the members of my fraternity? How to extend the experience of brotherhood in our presbyteries, in our parish communities, in our Church and in our world?



Fernando E. RAMÓN CASAS

(Translator's note: thank you for your understanding and compassion)