



International Community of the Divine Savior

General Committee

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Feast of Easter – time of resurrection

The word “resurrection” has a special sense in these days of the pandemic. For over a year the whole world has suffered the CoVid19- virus and its variants and mutations. A large number of people have already fallen victim to the pandemic, and many more will be infected. Still others are on a difficult therapeutic path back to a hopefully normal life. For quite a few, the economic side effects are also a great challenge and often lead to impoverishment.

This is where the cynicism of business leaders hits particularly hard when they oppose protective measures or temporary plant closures, even though the health authorities know better. So, who has what welfare in mind and where should we turn?

Let us look at Jesus, it is his love of mankind, his trust in God, his unconditional commitment to peace. If we remember the words of the Sermon on the Mount, He has beatified the poor and those who helped the poor: the merciful, the nonviolent peacemakers. It was not about a little peace, but about the fundamental change in living conditions, a fundamental change of the people's mind. This should make us think, especially at this time.

Jesus has combined the unwavering confidence in God with the critical reflection on religious traditions. Thus, the Gospel of Easter, the founding document of Christianity, already contains the invitation to question critically religion. And that's why the great thinkers of the Christian faith have always known that believing in God is credible only when inhumane religious traditions are radically questioned as Jesus did.

On the day of Easter, the cheers are heard: "He is risen! He is truly risen!" This call carries the message of Jesus's message of peace into the world and gives it tremendous spiritual power: hatred and violence will not have the last word, but love, respect and peace will.

The Easter message also has a warning page: Unwavering faith in God must not be combined with inhumane religious dogmatism! This is a knowledge and wisdom that today cannot be proclaimed loud enough.

On his way to the cross, Jesus has experienced what it means when religious bullying leads to exclusion, hatred, and violence. The peace-loving was scorned, marginalized, insulted, declared a scapegoat. - Why? - Because he was different, he thought differently, acted differently than those who followed the prevailing spirit of the times. Because he has questioned some traditions and ways of life. Because he questioned whether they are still current and authentic. And maybe also, if they really serve the people?

This raises the question for us today: Doesn't this pandemic clearly show how vulnerable our commercialized world is? What a predicament we have got ourselves into through the ruthless exploitation of resources, the pollution and destruction of God's creation and the enslavement of millions of people that goes with it!

His path to the cross recalls the suffering of all who are despised today and persecuted as minorities, stigmatized as marginalized groups and migrants - because they speak differently, think differently, act differently, live differently - or simply have a different skin color. Certainly, there is also the wish to

make the world become a better and more fair place, not a permanent to fight to separate into winners and losers.

To a Christianity that takes its founding deed and its mission seriously, therefore, respect for the faith and the life situation of others is elementary. Christianity also requires us to take one's own faith seriously and to carry it into the present time - and to live it by today's standards so that it can become an attractive offering to others.

Christian Easter is a joyful invitation and a serious admonition: On one hand Easter is an invitation to celebrate life in all its facets. At the same time, on the other hand, Easter is an admonition to speak with your own words and do your utmost to keep the values of the Sermon on the Mount no longer as a utopian idea. An invitation to solidarity, respect and acceptance of and with the "different". The poor, the outcast, all people who have not been so well gifted by life, should not be written off and certainly not despised. Gentleness and charity must not be considered as weakness and madness or even as hostility toward their "own" people. A peacemaker must not be considered an unworldly romantic crackpot. Only then will we truly be resurrected - as a human being and as a Christian - and will be able to carry the message of Easter Sunday beyond that day into our own time.

Many of us will not be able to celebrate Easter together once again. This year the Corona pandemic necessitates keeping social distance, **but only physically**. Nothing prevents us from being united together in spirit, in prayer and in heart. We should be united and grateful for those people who are fighting against this epidemic, united and compassionate with the victims and families affected by this plague, and united with the sisters and brothers in the Salvatorian Family, in prayer, and in a life of hope and confidence.

This crisis shows us once again that we do not live in a first, second or third world. It shows us that there is only one world for us human beings, which we must deal with carefully and sustainably. Perhaps this will help us to focus on the things that really matter: mutual respect and love, frugality, and sharing the things that God has given us.

A joyful, peaceful and blessed Easter,
and over all: stay well!

The General Committee of the ICDS