



# International Community of the Divine Savior

## General Committee

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### *Meeting the Feast of Easter from today's view*

Sometimes one asks itself: "What fascinated and inspired people 2000 years ago in their personal encounter with Jesus of Nazareth? - And what moves us today - and what do we seem to have lost today? "

Looking 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.

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?

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. 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 by which, 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. 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 the "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 this into our own time.

Many of us will not be able to celebrate Easter together this year because of the Corona pandemic which 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*