



The Holy See

URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II

Easter Sunday, 20 April 2003

1. "*Surrexit Dominus de sepulcro
qui pro nobis pependit in ligno*" (from the Liturgy).
"The Lord is risen from the tomb;
for our sake he hung on the Cross". Alleluia!
The Easter proclamation joyfully resounds:
Christ is risen! He is truly risen!
He who "suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried",
Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary,
"rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (*Creed*).

2. This proclamation is the foundation
of the hope of all mankind.
If Christ did not rise from the dead,
not only would our faith be in vain (cf. 1 *Cor* 15:14),
but our hope would also be vain,
for we would all still be held hostage by evil and death.
"But in fact – today's Liturgy proclaims –
*Christ has been raised from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep*" (1 *Cor* 15:20).
By his death Jesus has crushed and triumphed over
the iron-clad law of death,
eliminating its poisonous root for ever.

3. "*Peace be with you!*" (*Jn* 20:19,20).

This is the first greeting of the Risen One to his disciples;
 a greeting which echoes today throughout the world.
 O Good News, so long awaited, so greatly desired!
 O proclamation of consolation for all those oppressed
 beneath the burden of sin and its many structures!
 For all, especially for the least and the poor,
 we proclaim today the hope of peace,
 of true peace, founded on the solid pillars
 of love and justice, of truth and freedom.

4. "*Pacem in terris...*".

"Peace on earth, the profound aspiration
 of men and women of all times,
 can be firmly established and sustained
 only if the order established by God
 is firmly respected" (Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Introduction).
 These are the first words of the historic Encyclical,
 in which forty years ago
 Blessed Pope John XXIII
 indicated to the world the way of peace.
 These words remain as timely as ever
 at the dawn of the third millennium,
 tragically marred by acts of violence and conflicts.

5. Peace in Iraq! With the support
 of the international community,
 may the Iraqi people become the protagonists
 of the collective rebuilding of their country.
 Peace in other parts of the world,
 where forgotten wars and protracted hostilities
 are causing deaths and injuries amid silence and neglect
 on the part of considerable sectors of public opinion.
 With profound grief I think of the wake
 of violence and bloodshed, with no sign of ceasing,
 in the Holy Land.
 I think of the tragic situation
 of many countries on the African continent,
 which cannot be abandoned to itself.
 I am well aware of the centres of tension
 and the attacks on people's freedom
 in the Caucasus, in Asia and in Latin America,

areas of the world equally dear to me.

6. Let there be an end to the chain of hatred and terrorism,
which threatens the orderly development of the human family.

May God grant that we be free
from the peril of a tragic clash
between cultures and religions.

May faith and love of God
make the followers of every religion
courageous builders of understanding and forgiveness,
patient weavers of a fruitful inter-religious dialogue,
capable of inaugurating a new era of justice and peace.

7. As he said to the terrified Apostles on the wind-swept sea,
Christ says once more to the men and women of our time:

"Take heart, it is I; have no fear!" (Mk 6:50).

If he is with us, why should we fear?

However dark the horizon of humanity may seem,
today we celebrate the radiant triumph of Easter joy.

If a contrary wind slows the march of peoples,
if the sea of history is tossed by storms,
let no one yield to dismay and lack of trust!

Christ is risen; Christ is alive in our midst;
truly present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist,
he offers himself as the Bread of salvation,
Bread for the poor, the Food of wayfarers.

8. O divine presence of love,

O living memorial of Christ our Pasch,
for the suffering and the dying you are food for their journey,
for everyone you are the sure pledge of eternal life!

O Mary, the first tabernacle of history,
silent witness of the wonders of Easter,
help us to sing with our lives
your own *Magnificat* of praise and thanksgiving,
for today "The Lord is risen from the tomb;
for our sake he hung on the Cross".

Christ is risen, our peace and our hope.

He is risen. Alleluia!

©Copyright - Libreria Editrice Vaticana