



April 12, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Rising of Jesus Christ on Easter from His human death on the cross to new and unending life has forever influenced and changed human history and, indeed, our lives. One sentence in the Gospel according to Saint John gives us the key to understanding how and why the Rising of Jesus Christ makes all the difference: “And he saw and believed” (cf. 20:8).

What did John see? The same thing that Simon Peter saw: “the burial cloths and the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head, not with the burial cloths, but rolled up in a separate place” (cf. 20:7). Now the presence of the cloths and their position indicated that the person who was wrapped in them had passed out of them. He understood that no one had stolen the body of Jesus because the cloths were in place, not disheveled, and the head cloth was rolled up by itself.

And so, John came to the realization that Jesus Christ is risen just as He had promised. Yes, John saw the same reality, but he saw it differently. Here is the primary lesson for us: the disciples of the Risen Christ see the same reality as everyone else, but we see it in a different way: with faith and hope. That is why we look to the Risen Lord Jesus and echo the words of Mary Magdalen in the Easter Sequence: “Yes, Christ my hope is arisen...” The Risen Lord Jesus is Christ our Hope and because He is, we see everything differently!

Let us look at a practical application of this truth: there is no immediate solution to the stark economic issues we face. Yet, through faith in Christ our Hope, we can come to realize that we are united to Christ and to each other in love. These relationships give us the strength to persevere. Moreover, this different way of seeing provides an opportunity for those of us who have more to reach out and help our sisters and brothers who have less. Like Saint John, we see and believe.

When our Holy Father recently celebrated Mass in Angola, he told the congregation, “Today it is up to you to offer the Risen Christ to your fellow citizens.” Yes, my brothers and sisters, we are His witnesses who, filled with hope in the Risen Christ, have been “commissioned” to present Christ to others in sincerity and truth. This we must do every day, with our families, our neighbors, in our places of work, in our parishes and in our communities.

Yes, like Saint John, we see and believe! Let us go forth, with faith and hope in the Risen Christ, and live the Good News of Easter!

Faithfully in Christ,

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