

The Power of Our Resurrection Faith - by Sr. Margaret Dorgan, DCM

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THE POWER OF OUR RESURRECTION FAITH

"More and more believers, men and women in great numbers, were continually added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14). The power of Jesus' Resurrection is manifest in the crowds who hear the message of His apostles and are convinced by their words. The listeners accept the Good News. It entails a departure from what their lives have been up to this point. These Jews do not reject what was communicated in the Hebrew Bible. But now they move forward in response to the apostolic preaching. The fulfillment of the biblical prophecies has taken place in a manner that exceeds all expectation. "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know beyond any doubt that God has made both Lord and Messiah this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

What is the reaction to that declaration by St. Peter? "When they heard this they were deeply shaken" (27). Belief in Jesus does not leave us where we once were. With every increase of our faith we make a deliberate decision. We divest ourselves of what can be an obstacle to union with Christ. Our ears are open to the divine call summoning us to holiness. Faith lights up those shadowy aspects of our lives which we need to let go.

Peter is asked, "What are we to do?" He answers, "You must reform and be baptized each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:37,38). Reforming our lives involves a wholehearted resolution to follow a path our Redeemer lays out for us. We take a firm stand to belong to Him. This is a choice we continue to make each new day which unlocks its own unique possibilities . "We are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

Ours is a world where many human beings are hungry for meaning, and too often devour the wrong food to satisfy their appetites. Words and images are used in a profane way to entice the young to seek happiness where the pleasure of the moment can frequently guarantee misery in the future. People are "tossed here and there and carried about with every wind...by cunning, by craftiness in deceitful wiles" (Eph 4:14). When we see the unwary sucked down into aching emptiness we long to help them find the fullness Christ came to this earth to give.

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, from her Carmelite monastery in Dijon, France, wrote to a young girl on the Tuesday after Easter, "If you knew how good He (Jesus) is, how He is all love! I am asking Him to reveal Himself to your soul, to be the Friend whom you always know how to find. Then everything is illuminated and it is so good to be alive!" (Letter 161, Complete Works, Vol Two, ICS edition). In that same Easter octave, Blessed Elizabeth penned these words, "Faith is so good. It is Heaven in darkness, but one day the veil will be lifted and we will contemplate in His light Him Whom we love" (Letter 162). Later she wrote, "Let us live with Him, for He alone can accompany and help us on this great journey. He is a God of love" (Letter 267).

Jesus wants to be our steadfast companion, the one we turn to in all our joys and in every trial. We have a Brother Who always listens. He is eager to spend for us His patrimony from the Father.

Being aware Christ is part of this sojourn in time transforms the passing instants. Whatever takes place, we are never left alone in a cold isolation. Through faith, we feel His warm hand grasping our own and assuring us of His saving Presence. We respond to Him, "You are my shelter. From distress you will preserve me. With glad cries of freedom You will ring me round" (Ps 32: 7).

Since the blessed hour when Jesus rose from the dead, all temporal moments have become translucent with His Resurrection glory. I ask Him to teach me to recognize that shining, enclosed in the happenings of my day. In every tomorrow my Risen Savior invites me to find Him more and more.

Blessed with the illumination of Christ's saving power, we make use of it to carry a beacon of light and peace wherever we go. "My tongue shall recount your justice, Your praise all the day" (Ps 35:28). Faith unlocks the door to the secrets of an eternal kingdom. Jesus, help us to show others how their lives can reach for the fullness You have in store for them. Let the radiance of the Resurrection arouse human hearts into love for one another.

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