



Every Easter is a celebration
of the whole of creation
transformed in the light of
the risen Christ ...
the Christ-event involves
everything on Earth...

Fr Denis Edwards
Ecology at the Heart of Faith

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE RISEN LORD

In his Easter Sunday homily for 2017, Pope Francis invited us to identify with the grief and feelings of injustice experienced by the women who witnessed Jesus' brutal death and then their shock and distress at finding his tomb empty. We are invited to see reflected in their faces all those who:

Walking the streets of our cities, feel the pain of dire poverty, the sorrow born of dire poverty, the sorrow born of exploitation and human trafficking. We can also see the faces of those who are greeted with contempt because they are immigrants, deprived of country, house and family. We see faces whose eyes bespeak loneliness and abandonment because their hands are creased with wrinkles. Their faces mirror the faces of women, mothers, who weep as they see the lives of their children crushed by massive corruption that strips them of their rights and shatters their dreams. By daily acts of selfishness that crucify and then bury people's hopes.

In a post-pandemic world, struggling with widespread poverty, war, increasing numbers of refugees and the impact of climate catastrophes, we are called to proclaim:

**the heartbeat of the risen Lord.
Christ is alive!**

Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history. Values always tend to reappear under new guises, and human beings have arisen time after time from situations that seemed doomed. Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelise are instruments of the power.

The Joy of the Gospel n276



ENCOUNTER AND ACCOMPANIMENT

In a world that more than ever before needs to hear the life-giving Easter message of hope, we might find ourselves identifying with the two disappointed disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) whose personal hopes for the changes Jesus would bring, were not realised as they had wanted. The disciple's walk with a 'stranger' and their eventual recognition of the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus, demonstrates, as Elizabeth Johnson writes in *Creation and the Cross*:

... the presence of God walking with the world through its trauma and travail, even unto death. This entails a double solidarity, of the actual Jesus who lived with all who live, suffer and die, and of the resurrecting God of life with the ministering and crucified Jesus.



To live the Easter celebration of light coming out of darkness, with courageous hope in Jesus raised from the dead by a merciful God, means being open to the presence of the risen Christ in all that we experience in the world. In an address to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), Elizabeth Johnson posed the following questions:

Who might be the unrecognised bearer of the presence of Christ? Is it the person of a different culture, a different economic class, a different generation, a different race, a different gender, a different sexual orientation, a different philosophy of life, even a different religious experience of the holy and therefore a different faith tradition?

Who are the people with whom we need to dialogue, and what roads are we willing to walk on to meet them? It is entirely possible that such encounter, engaged from the standpoint of faith, may bear the seeds of new, as yet unimagined life.

ACCOMPANIMENT IN LOVE AND MERCY

Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force.

The Joy of the Gospel n276

The risen Christ, who shared our humanity, now accompanies us in every part of our lives. Richard Leonard SJ illustrates this in *What Are We Hoping For?*

- ◆ When we are betrayed by friends and abandoned by companions, denied by those closest to us, falsely accused, and had our integrity questioned, then the Risen Christ, who has been there first, will never deny or falsely accuse us, and will stand up with us and for us.
- ◆ When we are judged and condemned, pushed from pillar to post and our emotions are laid bare, then the Risen Christ, who has been their first, offers us comfort and healing.
- ◆ When we have felt the full weight of our burdens and the loneliness of dealing with them on our own, then the Risen Christ has been there first, and is our companion in the darkest of hours.
- ◆ When we go through the heartbreak of having someone we love die, or the thousand other deaths that constitute our lives, then the Risen Christ has been there first to reassure us that there is no place he will not attend with us.

*God, who calls us
to generous commitment
and to give him our all,
offers us the light and the strength
needed to continue on our way.
In the heart of this world, the Lord of life,
who loves us so much, is always present.
He does not abandon us, he does not leave us
alone, for he has united himself definitively to
our earth, and his love constantly impels us
to find new ways forward.*

Laudato Si' n245

Alleluia!