

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

"And now here is my secret," says the Fox to the Little Prince, "a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." I have always loved this line from the Little Prince by St Exupery, a French writer. Are we not here exactly at the heart of today's Gospel? To see with the heart things that are invisible to the eye is not what faith is all about?

Faith is not about believing that something is true or probable... Faith, Christian faith is about believing *in* Jesus, the Risen Lord. Faith is not about proof; faith is about trust relationship and more importantly, love.

On the evening of Easter day, despite the women's testimony early in the morning, despite having seen the empty tomb, the disciples were gathered in a locked room filled with fear. They could not, they would not believe what they heard. When Jesus appeared in their midst, they were not able to rejoice before seeing Jesus' wounds. Thomas could not, and would not believe his friends. Like them, he needed to see by himself. He needed proof. It's good to know that not one person was able to recognize Jesus at first after his resurrection.

One week later Jesus appeared again in the midst of the disciples answering precisely Thomas' request to see and touch Jesus' wounds. This is a way to tell us that the Risen Lord is always present in the disciples' lives, even when they are not aware of it. This is a way to tell us that the Risen Lord cares for us, our needs, our doubts, our questions.

Thomas proclaimed the most powerful declaration of faith: "My Lord and my God!" It was a turning point in Thomas' life, then he understood. Then he put his trust in Jesus, Meeting the risen Lord transformed Thomas' life. He believed and suddenly he realized that the Risen Lord was not a Savior, nor The Savior, but "his" Savior. "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." When Thomas was able to trust his heart, not his eyes, he was able to proclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

"The essential is invisible to the eye." We know the truth of this saying. If we worship together virtually today it is precisely because we have put our trust in God, we have put out trust in Jesus. We know that God is present in this world; we know that Jesus is present in our lives; we know that the Spirit is working in the hearts of people today all around the world... We know this is true, despite our eyes and ears telling us that this world is full of fear, injustice, violence, and pain. Despite all the bad news that we receive, we know that God is still here. Despite all the bad things happening, we know that Jesus is still present. We know it for sure because it's something we can see, feel and experience, with our hearts. This is beautifully expressed at the beginning of the second Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation of the Roman Church: "in the midst of conflict and division, we know it is you who turn our minds to thoughts of peace. Your Spirit changes our hearts: enemies begin to speak to one another, those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together. Your Spirit is at work when understanding puts an end to strife, when hatred is quenched by mercy, and vengeance gives way to forgiveness."

"It's only with the heart that one can see rightly." Actually, it seems that one of the meanings of the Latin word "credo", I believe, has something to do with Heart. Credo, I believe, is not about giving our consent to a set of doctrines or theological truth, but it's a way to proclaim, "I give my heart to", "I put my trust in"... I do not believe in a theological formula about God, I do not believe in a set of affirmations about Jesus the Risen Lord... No, when in church we say "I believe" we say "I give my heart to the Triune

God" who sustains the creation, I give my heart to the Risen Lord who redeems us, I give my heart to the Holy Spirit who still blows in my life and in the world around me. When I say I believe I mean: I put my trust in God, and I give my heart to God. I put my trust in Jesus and I give my heart to the Risen Lord who reveals to us the face of God.

Of course, it's not possible to say *I give my heart to Jesus* without having first a personal encounter with him. It's why we need to nurture our faith by reading the Scriptures where we can encounter the living God, by praying so the Lord may transform us slowly, and by serving our brothers and sisters in humanity who are the face of the Lord for us today.

What is the Good News of Easter for you today? In whom do you believe? What does that change in your life? How does your faith in Christ transform your vision of the world?

We believe in Jesus without having the chance to see him with our eyes like countless generations of Christians. The words of Peter are for us this morning, "Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." We rejoice this morning, even though we are not able to gather together in person. We rejoice this morning, and we receive a special blessing from the Lord himself. To each one of us, Jesus is telling again, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Believing in Jesus, let us follow the fox's advice to see the world around us using our hearts. We will see a very different world, a world blessed and filled by the active and loving presence of the risen Lord.

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