Easter for a Life with Hope

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Today, therapies for success, happiness, introspection, etc., abound in all media. Around us, every type of coaching proliferates, e.g., training, mentoring, motivational conferences, inspirational books and programs, clinics, experts, and methodologies. They all promise to improve human life. At the same time, problems related to mental health, anguish, and meaninglessness grow.

These businesses and problems grow because humans have an unceasing need to improve, advance, and seek a better life, and, because it can also be hard finding reasons to hope for a better future.

Every human's primary vocation is humanizing oneself each day to be better and live the values inscribed within our hearts, such as the yearning for life, freedom, justice, truth, solidarity, and peace.

Also, in the social dimension and in coexistence, we all experience the need for growth and improvement in interpersonal relationships, social structures, and organizations.

Families, schools, and all our social encounters and institutions, especially those related to religion, exist to imbue societal life with values, to help each human being emerge and practice the best human values or reprimand, if needed, those who would attack them, whenever they choose to do so.

This need for humanization and improvement is exactly the fundamental message that the liturgical celebration of Christian Easter brings to us during this season.

"Pascua," a Spanish word meaning ***"Easter"*** and ***"Passover"*** comes from a Hebrew word meaning ***"passage."*** Christian Easter commemorates – remotely – the "passage" of the Old Testament

people from Egyptian slavery to freedom. Similarly, we confess and celebrate the "passage" of the Crucified One from death to life, the "passage" from the apparent failure on the Cross of Jesus's life plan and Gospel to victory over evil, to triumph over every form of slavery and death.

After the death of Jesus, the first experience that the first disciples of the Master of Nazareth lived and shared was a transformation of their minds (Rom 12:2), to live according to the logic and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18-25). This was a transformation that consisted of a new life (2 Cor 5:17) by which they can now call God "Father" (Gal 4:6) and can, therefore, live, loving and serving everyone as brothers and sisters.

This experience of change, transformation, and these new lives of the first Christians is the historical foundation of the resurrection. This is the new life by which they confess the dead as alive, the Crucified One as the Living One, as the Risen One, as present in their midst.

Since then, the best witness and presence of the Risen One in the world is the new life of men and women, who – for this very reason – confess the encounter with the Crucified-Risen One as the reason for this new life, to the point of crying out like Paul: *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Gal 2:20)

This new, joyful, fearless life, a builder of peace through forgiveness and through bread broken and shared, an abundant life of hope through the fraternal commandment of love, are the fruits described in the accounts of the apparitions in the Gospels.

The fundamental message of Christian Easter, which celebrates the resurrection of the Crucified One, is, therefore, an exhortation and invitation to all humanity to "pass" from forms of death to forms of life, from violent and fratricidal culture to a civilization of love and a culture of hope in solidarity.

Easter, therefore, is not a commemoration, a celebration exclusively for Christians. It is, conversely, God's definitive and final word on the life and death of man and all humanity. Through Christ's resurrection, we can live in joyful hope, certain that we are called to salvation and not to failure or the triumph of evil.

The resurrection sings and proclaims the possibility of the full life for which we all yearn – not just Christ's disciples – because *"God wants everyone to be saved..."* (1 Tim 2:4). Through the resurrection, we believe and confess that the full, happy, eternal life for which we all hope is possible, or rather, certain in the God of Jesus Christ.

The celebration of Easter, synonymous with the celebration of the abundant life for which we yearn, is an unbeatable contribution of the Christian faith to the hope of all humanity and *"represents a noble effort to continue to affirm life even where it succumbs, defeated by death."* (Manuel Fraijó – Quoted in: Pagola, José Antonio, El camino abierto por Jesús, Mateo 1, Pg. 301, translated to English).

We celebrate Easter by "passing" toward a better personal, family, and social life and story. May we live Easter every day by "passing" towards better relationships and institutions. Amidst the evil we confront every day, may we overcome ourselves and it by building and "passing" into spaces of life and hope.

Happy Easter!

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