



The Holy See

URBI et ORBI Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II

Easter Sunday, 23 April 2000

1. *“Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando . . .”*

“Death and life have contended
in that stupendous combat:
The Prince of life, who died,
reigns immortal” (*Easter Sequence*).

Once again, today, the whole Church
pauses in amazement at the empty tomb.
Like Mary Magdalen and the other women,
who came to anoint with spices
the body of the Crucified One,
like the Apostles Peter and John
who came running
at the word of the women,
the Church bows before the tomb
in which her Lord was placed
after the crucifixion.

A month ago, as a pilgrim in the Holy Land,
I had the grace of kneeling
before the stone slab
which marks the place of Jesus’ burial.

Today, Easter Sunday,
I make my own the proclamation of the heavenly messenger:
“He is risen, he is not here” (*Mk 16:6*).

Yes, life and death were locked in combat
and Life was victorious for ever.

All is once again oriented to life,
to Eternal Life!

2. "*Victimae paschali laudes immolent christiani . . .*"

"Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
has sinners to his Father reconciled".

The words of the Easter Sequence
marvellously express the mystery
accomplished in Christ's Passover.

They point to the power of renewal
flowing from his Resurrection.

With the weapons of love,
God has defeated sin and death.

The Eternal Son, who emptied himself
to become the obedient servant
to the point of dying on the Cross (cf. *Phil 2:7-8*),
has conquered evil at its roots
by opening to contrite hearts
the path of return to the Father.

He is the Gate of Life
who at Easter overcomes the gates of hell.

He is the Door of salvation, opened wide for all,
the Door of divine mercy,
who sheds a new light on human existence.

3. The Risen Christ signals the paths of hope
along which we can advance together
towards a world more just and mutually supportive,
in which the blind egoism of the few
will not prevail over the cries of pain of the many,
reducing entire peoples
to conditions of degrading misery.
May the message of life proclaimed by the angel
near the stone rolled back from the tomb
overturn the hardness of our hearts;
may it lead to removing unjustified barriers
and promote a fruitful exchange between peoples and cultures.
May the image of the new man,
shining on the face of Christ,

cause everyone to acknowledge
 the inalienable value of human life;
 may it encourage effective responses
 to the increasingly felt demand
 for justice and equal opportunity
 in all areas of society;
 may it impel individuals and States
 to full respect for the essential and authentic rights
 rooted in the very nature of the human person.

4. Lord Jesus, our Peace (*Eph 2:14*),
 Word made flesh two thousand years ago,
 who by rising from the dead have conquered evil and sin,
 grant the human family of the third millennium
 a just and lasting peace;
 bring to a happy outcome the talks undertaken
 by people of good will who,
 despite so many doubts and difficulties,
 are trying to bring an end to the troubling conflicts in Africa,
 the armed clashes in some countries of Latin America,
 the persistent tensions affecting
 the Middle East, vast areas of Asia,
 and some parts of Europe.
 Help the nations to overcome old and new rivalries,
 by rejecting attitudes of racism and xenophobia.
 May the whole of creation,
 inundated by the splendour of the Resurrection,
 rejoice because "the brightness of the eternal King
 has vanquished the darkness of the world" (*Easter Proclamation*).
 Yes, Christ has risen victorious,
 and has offered man, Adam's heir in sin and death,
 a new heritage of life and glory.

5. "*Ubi est mors stimulus tuus?*"
 "O death, where is your sting?" (*1 Cor 15:55*),
 exclaims the Apostle Paul,
 touched on the road to Damascus
 by the light of the Risen Christ.
 His cry echoes down the centuries
 as the proclamation of life for the whole of human civilization.
 We too, the men and women of the twenty-first century,

are invited to be mindful
of this victory of Christ over death,
revealed to the women of Jerusalem and the Apostles,
when they arrived hesitantly at the tomb.

Through the Church,
the experience of these eye-witnesses has
come down to us too.

It is a significant part
of the journey of the pilgrims who,
during this Year of the Great Jubilee,
are entering through the Holy Door,
and going away with renewed courage
to build pathways of reconciliation with God
and with their brothers and sisters.

At the heart of this Year of grace,
may the proclamation of Christ's followers
be heard more loudly and clearly,
a joint proclamation, beyond all divisions,
in ardent longing for full communion:

"Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere".

"Yes, that Christ is truly risen from the dead we know,
Victorious King, your mercy show!"

Amen.