

INTRODUCTION

Happy Easter to all!

In the context of the truth of faith of the Mystical Body, the call to preach was the great commission by the Risen Jesus, the Head, to his disciples and now, to us, the whole Church, members of his Body. "Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all people." Mark 16:15

We, the believers, have been given a share of this mission--to be heralds of the good news of salvation and hope in his resurrection. But we have not been left alone in this for Jesus works in and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit, the promise of Jesus that he will be with us always, to the end of the age (Mt 28:20).

To preach God's word, as an urgent mission, one must have faith that the gospel has power to forgive sins, to heal, to restore life. *Believers will be given the power to perform miracles . . . they will place their hands on sick people, and these will get well (Mk. 16:17-18).*

But preaching the gospel must also be a preventive aim, meaning the Word of God also prevents Christ's body to be more wounded, as preaching the Word leads people to fullness of life and love. *Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you (Mt. 28:19-20)*

As Verbum Dei, gifted by the Holy Spirit, the charism of prayer and preaching, we are God's messengers who were sent out and come to proclaim the good news so that who ever hears the message will believe and become his disciples too (Rom

10:14-17).

What are we to preach to them? Why is preaching so urgent and should act on it? How to respond with urgency to this call to preach the good news of the gospel?

MONDAY

The richness of the resurrection experience

John 20:11-18

"Woman, why are you crying?" they asked her. She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!" Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who is it that you are looking for?" She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, "If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (This means "Teacher.") "Do not hold on to me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God." So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her.

Like Mary Magdalene, we were still looking for Jesus in a certain way like of the past which prevents us to recognize the living Jesus before us, revealing the richness of his resurrection. We have to let Jesus go and assume our mission: to announce to the members of His Body that he has opened up the way for us and thus, once more, God is close to us.

What particular experience has given us the impression where everything seems crumbled, lost, and finished? How

was it? What certain way gave us new life, new hope and the joy of living?

TUESDAY

The good news of his resurrection

Acts 10:38-43

You know about Jesus of Nazareth and how God poured out on him the Holy Spirit and power. He went everywhere, doing good and healing all who were under the power of the Devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of everything that he did in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Then they put him to death by nailing him to a cross. But God raised him from death three days later and caused him to appear, not to everyone, but only to the witnesses that God had already chosen, that is, to us who ate and drank with him after he rose from death. And he commanded us to preach the gospel to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets spoke about him, saying that all who believe in him will have their sins forgiven through the power of his name."

Mark 16:6-7

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here—he has been raised! Look, here is the place where he was placed. Now go and give this message to his disciples, including Peter: 'He is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him, just as he told you.'"

The reality of Jesus' resurrection is the central fact of our faith. That he have gone ahead of us, triumphed over death, and have won new life for us. Isn't it good news? And there's no greater joy than to encounter the living Christ and to know him personally.

Isn't this what Jesus is asking us to share to the suffering Christ of today, to celebrate the feast of Easter with joy and thanksgiving for the victory? How do we

witness this joy of the gospel to those around us?

WEDNESDAY

Many are still waiting and begging for something

Acts 3:1-10

One day Peter and John went to the Temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour for prayer. There at the Beautiful Gate, as it was called, was a man who had been lame all his life. Every day he was carried to the gate to beg for money from the people who were going into the Temple. When he saw Peter and John going in, he begged them to give him something. They looked straight at him, and Peter said, "Look at us!" So he looked at them, expecting to get something from them. But Peter said to him, "I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I order you to get up and walk!" Then he took him by his right hand and helped him up. At once the man's feet and ankles became strong; he jumped up, stood on his feet, and started walking around. Then he went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. The people there saw him walking and praising God, and when they recognized him as the beggar who had sat at the Beautiful Gate, they were all surprised and amazed at what had happened to him.

Many of our brothers and sisters around us are still in need of our attention, pleading for healing, and waiting for a miracle to come in their lives. We were once like them before we encountered the Word. But we become witnesses of this miracles, through the obedience of others who responded to the call to preach, filled with wonder and amazement.

How did the Word come to us that led us to embrace the faith and repent for our sins? Don't we wish also that others may experience the newness, and joy from Jesus' resurrection?

THURSDAY

Not all have believed and accepted the Good News

Romans 10:14-17

But how can they call to him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed? And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out? As the scripture says, "How wonderful is the coming of messengers who bring good news!" But not all have accepted the Good News. Isaiah himself said, "Lord, who believed our message?" So then, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through preaching Christ.

This is now Jesus' appeal to us, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples... and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). Because faith comes by hearing the preaching of the Word.

To whom Jesus is telling us to go and preach God's word?

FRIDAY

Through Jesus' power, make a stand for our least brothers and sisters

Acts 4:1-12

Peter and John were still speaking to the people when some priests, the officer in charge of the Temple guards, and some Sadducees arrived. They were annoyed because the two apostles were teaching the people that Jesus had risen from death, which proved that the dead will rise to life. So they arrested them and put them in jail until the next day, since it was already late. But many who heard the message believed; and the number grew to about five thousand.

The next day the Jewish leaders, the elders, and the teachers of the Law

gathered in Jerusalem. They met with the High Priest Annas and with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and the others who belonged to the High Priest's family. They made the apostles stand before them and asked them, "How did you do this? What power do you have or whose name did you use?" Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, answered them, "Leaders of the people and elders: if we are being questioned today about the good deed done to the lame man and how he was healed, then you should all know, and all the people of Israel should know, that this man stands here before you completely well through the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—whom you crucified and whom God raised from death. Jesus is the one of whom the scripture says, 'The stone that you the builders despised turned out to be the most important of all.'

Salvation is to be found through him alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us."

The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard (Evangelii Gaudium #2). So, we who have been freed from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and had a renewed personal encounter with Jesus must make a stand to preach the good news to others in order to teach them who to run to in times of temptations, troubles, and challenges.

SATURDAY

Nothing can stop us from speaking what we have heard and seen

Acts 4:13-21

The members of the Council were amazed to see how bold Peter and John were and to learn that they were ordinary men of no education. They realized then that they had been companions of Jesus. But there was nothing that they could say,

because they saw the man who had been healed standing there with Peter and John. So they told them to leave the Council room, and then they started discussing among themselves. "What shall we do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone in Jerusalem knows that this extraordinary miracle has been performed by them, and we cannot deny it. But to keep this matter from spreading any further among the people, let us warn these men never again to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus."

So they called them back in and told them that under no condition were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "You yourselves judge which is right in God's sight—to obey you or to obey God. For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard." So the Council warned them even more strongly and then set them free. They saw that it was impossible to punish them, because the people were all praising God for what had happened.

We mustn't forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. All of them have a right to receive the gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone (Evangelii Gaudium #14)

SUNDAY

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

First Reading: Acts 4:32-35
Res. Psalm: Psalm 118
Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-6
Gospel: John 20:19-31

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

The Urgency of Preaching

April 2-8, 2018

General Theme:
MYSTICAL BODY OF
CHRIST: The preaching
and the way we preach is
transformed.

General Objective: To be aware
of the presence of Christ in our
brothers and sisters of today and to
listen to the call of God to
announce urgently the Word of
God as a way of transforming the
world.

Specific objective:
Following Easter Sunday, we
deepen in the urgency of the call to
preach the Good News of the
Gospel.