



*In the place where he had been crucified  
there was a garden, and in the garden a  
new tomb... So they laid Jesus there.  
(Jn 19, 42-42)*

Dear confrères,

workers of hope and companions in mission, sowers of life where often there seems to be only death, on these holy days, as we celebrate Easter, we feel strongly in us the desire to reach out to you with a thought, a prayer, and a fraternal embrace.

You are where life often seems to give way to death, where human dignity is daily humiliated, crushed, offended, and sometimes denied altogether. And yet, right there, you are called to be a living presence of the Risen One in the most diverse ways:

in choosing to stand beside the least of people, in lifting up those who have fallen, in restoring dignity to those who have been trampled... Often the world may seem like a barren desert to you, but that is when you must believe that, sustained by the Spirit, you can help transform it into a lush 'garden' of life.

Yes, because the Resurrection is not just an event of the past to be remembered with devotion. It is a fire that still burns, it is a force that continues to open up gravesites, to roll away tombstones that are too heavy, to sprout life even in the driest soils.

You know this well, although sometimes it is hard for you to believe it. At times you feel alone, overwhelmed by fatigue, discouraged by the harshness of reality and the poor results of your efforts. Yet, you continue to bear daily witness to Christ's victory over death with simple and silent gestures: a child fed, a wound healed, a hand held out, a word spoken in the dark, a division healed, a hatred erased... Each of your acts of love is a denial of the logic of death.

It is Easter, it is new life! Although often surrounded by fetid and poisonous atmospheres, you can still believe – and see – that even the most terrible and darkest 'tomb' is always located – in a mysterious but real way – in an 'Eden'. Not everyone believes and sees this. You do!

In the midst of a world that at times seems to have gone mad – marked by wars, deaths, misery, violence, indifference, overpowering and exploitation, ecological disasters, terrible humanitarian and environmental crises caused mostly by humanity – you continue to believe in 'gardens in the desert', to plant and expand them, in the spirit of a true 'integral ecology', and to sow beauty even where it seems impossible, to bet on goodness, on fraternity, on full life, and on the Gospel.

We all know that it is not easy. Sometimes the weight of grief around you seems greater than your strength. But do not forget: the tomb is empty. The Lord has risen. And with him, your every gesture has meaning. Every choice you make is light. Every step you take is Gospel incarnate. Every child who smiles again, every sick person cured, every injustice fought, every gesture of love made is a sign that the stone of the tomb can be rolled away, and that life can once again blossom.

You are not alone. Christ is walking with you.

And we, your confrères, are beside you with prayer, friendship, admiration, and gratitude. The world needs you who do not give in to darkness, but persist in lighting lamps, even when they seem useless.

Easter is just that: knowing that, despite everything, Life has the last word; that, where the world puts a grave, God builds a cradle; and that there is salvation even where there seems to be only despair and death.

We carry you in our hearts. We entrust you to the Risen One. And we pray that you will experience a true Easter: one of light, of hope, of consolation, and of renewed impetus.

It is Easter! Love has won. And it will continue to win. With you, in you, thanks to you.

With affection and solidarity, we wish you a Happy Easter of hope and new life.

The General Council