

THE FORGE IN OUR DAILY LIFE

Quid Prodest

Easter

5

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

The Forge in Our Daily Life

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To help individuals, communities, Provinces and Delegations to be consciously aware of their present reality, rekindling their experience of Fire and Missionary zeal following the methodology of the Forge.

QUID PRODEST - 2011

PATRIS MEI - 2012

CARITAS CHRISTI - 2013

SPIRITUS DOMINI - 2014

OBJECTIVES OF *QUID PRODEST* STAGE

- To inspire an attitude of authenticity while seeking God's Will in one's own life, keeping in mind one's present experience of life.
- To calmly reread one's personal history, discerning it in the light of the Word of God.
- To learn to identify one's wounds in order to experience a process of healing.
- To recapture one's happiness in being a Claretian.
- To ground the search for a new response to God's Call, in a spirit of conversion in the light of the Claretian *Quid Prodest*.

- 1 The urgent thing is to wait (Advent)
- 2 And He dwelt among us (Christmas)
- 3 Called to be sons (Ordinary Time I)
- 4 On the road to Easter (Lent)
- 5 **The new life in Christ (Easter)**
- 6 Followers of Christ like Claret (Ordinary Time II)
- 7 Witnesses in the midst of the world (Ordinary Time III)
- 8 Born to love (Ordinary Time IV)
- 9 Looking back to look forward (Ordinary Time V)



1. The basis of life

Easter time is just beginning. You now have fifty days to internalize the most notable Mystery of the liturgical year and to enjoy the mysterious presence of the Risen Lord in your community and the special relationship that he will establish with you.

If you have been moved by the Spirit of *Quid Prodest* during the season of Lent and have been led across the desert, that same Spirit now wants you to contemplate the Promised Land. It's time to see the light of Glory, beyond crisis and temptation. It's time to experience Christ as "the resurrection and the life." It's time to establish your options at the crossroads that may lead you either to death or to life in all its fullness.

The Holy Spirit (the first Mystagogue) will take you from mystery to mystery, will help you to recognize the spirit of the Risen Lord "when breaking bread", when addressing you with the Word, when

inviting you “to row across that inner sea”. The Holy Spirit will help you savour the great Gift received, even through the ordinary and simple things in life, and will even welcome you into his own mystery: his own outpouring during Pentecost.

During Easter time, each day and each of the liturgical hours, you will have the chance to connect with the Risen Lord in the Spirit. You cannot, and should not, slacken in your efforts. Each day, and several times each day, the Lord will reveal himself. Expect to recognize him and listen carefully to the messages he will give you at opportune moments.

The Eucharist is an event that invites you to be vigilant, to be aware of where the Lord will take you, to welcome him into your heart, to confirm your faith in him, to accept whatever he sends your way.

The liturgical year is like a huge extended Eucharist. For us, as Claretian Missionaries, the liturgical year includes the daily Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours (cf. CC 35). In the liturgical year there is an awesome spiritual proposal which, through the efficacy of the Word, Eucharistic gifts and prayer, can transform our personal and community lives. As a missionary, you now have the opportunity of committing yourself to living the fifty days of Easter with a special intensity, of rejoicing in the presence of the Risen Lord, both internally and externally, in your personal, community and missionary life.

Exercise 1: Utopian journal

During this period of grace, we invite you to keep a “**Utopian journal**”.

It will consist of a notebook marked with the fifty days of Easter Time. **Each day try to write down the details of some event or manifestation of grace.** On Pentecost day, or during the community meeting, you can make an offering of your notebook, containing the 50 experiences of grace you have written down. By the end, **you will discover for yourself that Easter is a season of Grace** or a surprising, multi-faceted manifestation of God’s mercy in life.

2. Reflection

“Grain and ear”

The Easter event is not merely a call to have a personal experience of the Resurrection. Paul tells us that Jesus' resurrection is set within the “resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor 15). That means that the universal event of the resurrection of the dead finds its beginning in the resurrection of Jesus, the “very first resurrection”, “the firstborn from amongst the dead”.

For that reason, when Jesus rises from the dead, the space that envelops all human beings who die, opens up. From Easter Sunday itself, for those who have died in the Lord, a procession towards Life is started. He is risen, and with him his whole body, and all those who through their faith have been included.

But on the other hand, the event of Jesus' Resurrection brings together and reunites those who are scattered or facing challenges, it lifts the spirits of those who are disenchanted, it restores the faith of those who suffer doubt, it empowers the role of the women disciples.

Jesus knew that the grain of wheat would engender an “ear”, that's to say, a blessed and reunited propagation. In the event of faith being restored, there emerge qualified witnesses like Simon Peter. For that reason Jesus will entrust him with the task of strengthening the faith of his brothers, of feeding the sheep, of being a rock. Simon Peter, therefore, becomes the community's spokesperson. On behalf of everyone, men and women, he proclaims and announces the resurrection of the dead, of which Jesus is the first, the beginning. And, at the same time, he sends out a call to become a part of the community of believers.

We, as Claretian Missionaries, live out our faith and vocation as a community. We represent the Church in the little churches of our communities. The bedrock of each of them is the faith that we share, that we proclaim together, that we announce as evangelizers.

Our community is that space where the whole Church expresses its faith. We expand the space of our community when it reflects the universal Church, at all times (tradition) and everywhere. Fellowship with our Bishops and with the Pope, who are (according to our Constitutions) *fortes adiutores*, makes our little community a house and school of Christian fellowship, a reflection of the whole Christian community. Our attitude before the Church and all its authorized ministries is, therefore, attentive, observant, with a mature and creative acceptance or welcome.

The experience of Easter time can be lived by us as a time of community reconstruction and of fellowship with the Church. It is the season of the sprouting ear! The single grain has to die to produce abundant fruit and undergo the metamorphosis that changes it into an ear.

Exercise 2: The seed which grows

At the beginning of Easter, **you can sow a grain or seed**, in the most appropriate spot, so that you can give it the necessary attention and care each day. Each day of Easter, consider the process of its development, identify with it and, like the seed itself, sense your own calling to a metamorphosis. At the end, **you can also present this plant**, during the community meeting.

Quid Prodest for the duration of the “fifty days”

How does it benefit me? Once again, this is the question that keeps recurring throughout the year. It stops you again in your tracks on this momentous mystagogic journey that the fifty days of Easter lays before us. Each of the seven Sundays and each of the seven weeks will present you with variations on this same question.

Turn to the Church, which wants you to use this time for maximum spiritual benefit. Get on the same wave-length as the Congregation, which guides you in the experience of greater discernment, which you now know to be *Quid Prodest*.

During Easter, become ever more conscious of the process of change from grain to ear, as happens in the process of life and death. As a result, you can ask yourself: how does it benefit the grain to be cast into the earth and to die there? It will not bear fruit! It will be sterile and barren! So with you: how does it benefit you to look after yourself, to keep yourself in reserve, to protect yourself, to make yourself unavailable? Being self-centred becomes your prison, your coffin..... and in the same way, the grain will not become a ear, that is to say, not be instrumental in the propagation of the human race.

Easter journey, in the light of the Word

1. Easter Sunday: “They killed him. God raised him from the dead. We proclaim it”. How do you react to this message?

Easter time is not yet a period of absolute clarity. It is still somehow overshadowed by the shadows and doubts of Holy Saturday. In other words: not everyone takes an immediate step into Easter Sunday. We frequently live with the uncertainty that exists between the Saturday and the Sunday. This explains why some disciples would not believe everything they saw, they had their doubts, they needed time to assimilate the experience of "this new dimension" that the Resurrection of the Dead brought, which occurred with Jesus as the first-born.

It is good that we recognize that the dividing line between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday can be crossed in both directions, and we do frequently cross it in both directions.

At these crossroads, the following anxieties can arise:



What's the benefit in struggling against God and his community? What's the advantage in collaborating with the culture of death, if this has no future and will be defeated? How does it benefit me, as a human being, to step outside the light of Easter and opt for permanent inner darkness?

2. Second Sunday: "Blessed are those who believe without seeing!"

Since you are invited to touch the wounds of the Risen Lord's body, show him too your own wounds, everything that needs healing, the traumas of a past that have stolen your peace of mind, along with your fears and uncertainties. As with Thomas, the Apostle, the main doubts that envelop you could be the opportunity for healing yourself, or for testing and purifying your faith. Amongst these doubts, the following three are fundamental:

- *Doubting everything except oneself*: there is a perverse tendency in all of us to become the measure of everything. When we focus too much on our own "ego", it is very difficult for us to see what is going on "elsewhere". We find it very difficult to believe, to put ourselves out for others and to surrender ourselves to a cause other than ourselves.



- *Acting independently and forgetting him who has sent me:* this is when we follow the example of Simon Peter who said: “I am going fishing” and he forgets that the Master sent him to fish in other seas and “in his name”. There exists in us the perverse tendency of appropriating our given mission and going it alone. It is a tendency to break the Alliance with Jesus and his Spirit in the mission. The mission, then, is not “obedience”, but de-mission, independent effort.

- *Obsessively avoiding everything that restricts me, or humiliates me or doesn't have immediate appeal:* this is to eschew being a grain of wheat which falls into the soil and dies and awaits transformation. Sometimes we are a bit too genteel and self-satisfied. We run from anything that implies effort and frequently we don't even want to address our own personal hurts. We want everything to be in the immediate “here and now”, and we turn away from making the journey. During this period the Spirit of the Risen Lord is our mistagogue and through the power of his Word he provides us with the solution to overcome the clouds of Holy Saturday and finally enter the light of Easter Sunday. The day of the Lord is a wonderful day of readjustment and transcendence, a day of mission and obedience, a day when life is born from death.





On your Easter journey, in the light of *Quid Prodest*, you can ask yourself these questions: What is the point of having a mere “rationalist” attitude, allowing myself to be carried along by what is tangible and superficial? What is the benefit of living life with a permanent attitude of suspicious criticism, keeping an arrogant distance from the faith? Does my pride hide traumas and wounds from a past that I don’t want to fully acknowledge?

The person who lacks trust loses out and passes judgement on himself. Trust makes us happy and blessed. Distrust is destructive. He who trusts will never be deceived, because the person who believes in you is, in fact, the person who creates you.

3. Third Sunday: “Know once again!”

Faith is not always a matter of intuition, a “light bulb” moment, but rather a slow process of learning, a process of gradual acknowledgement.

The Lord’s appearances continue to take place. But now “under a different form”, “under the guise of the Eucharist” and through the proclamation of the Word. Each Eucharist is a time when the resurrected Spirit of the Lord reappears. Easter is prolonged in both time and space.

The Lord’s presence does not eliminate his absence. He continues to make himself present, in your life, in your community and in history itself, through the Spirit. Faith tells us that he is especially present in the “Word” and in the “form” of the Eucharist. He continues telling us, as he did the disciples on the edge of the lake: “come and eat”. That presence/absence invites us to pay homage to the “mystery of faith”, to shout out “Marana Tha”, to proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes again.

For that reason, Easter is a time to question your own faith and trust: What value is there in having an arrogant desire to see him immediately and to turn your back on the slow, painful process of acknowledging his presence? How often do you despair, when your own impatience blocks the mysterious roads towards the future?

4. Fourth Sunday: “Images of the Good Shepherd”

Jesus didn't want to leave us as orphans, nor did he abandon his flock. Under the guise of the Spirit and through his brothers and sisters, he continues his “pastoral” work.

Through our own Congregation, the communities and each one of us, the Spirit of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, continues working his mission. From the Congregation, we must reach up to Claret's experience: the Spirit of our Father and our Mother acts in us and through us. This awareness frees us from oppression, from tyranny, from hankering after our own interests or prestige. The person who allows himself to be moved by the Spirit of Jesus, is a child of God, one of God's missionaries.

Within the Congregation, we carry out the work of the Spirit within the ministerial and charismatic role of the ordained priest, or within the charismatic role of the lay brotherhood. Amongst the ordained Claretian ministers (whether priests or deacons) there is clear evidence of the continuity of the Church's apostolic roots and of the delivery of Jesus' commitment and service to the community. The Good Shepherd, who looks after the church, is made manifest and works through us. Brothers and Students alike are also ministers of the Spirit which “comes and goes mysteriously”, but which gives credibility to the event of the Resurrection of the dead and leads us to the fulfillment of our lives.

Easter is a time for becoming vividly aware of our mission and for discovering the will of the one who has sent us. It's right to ask yourself:

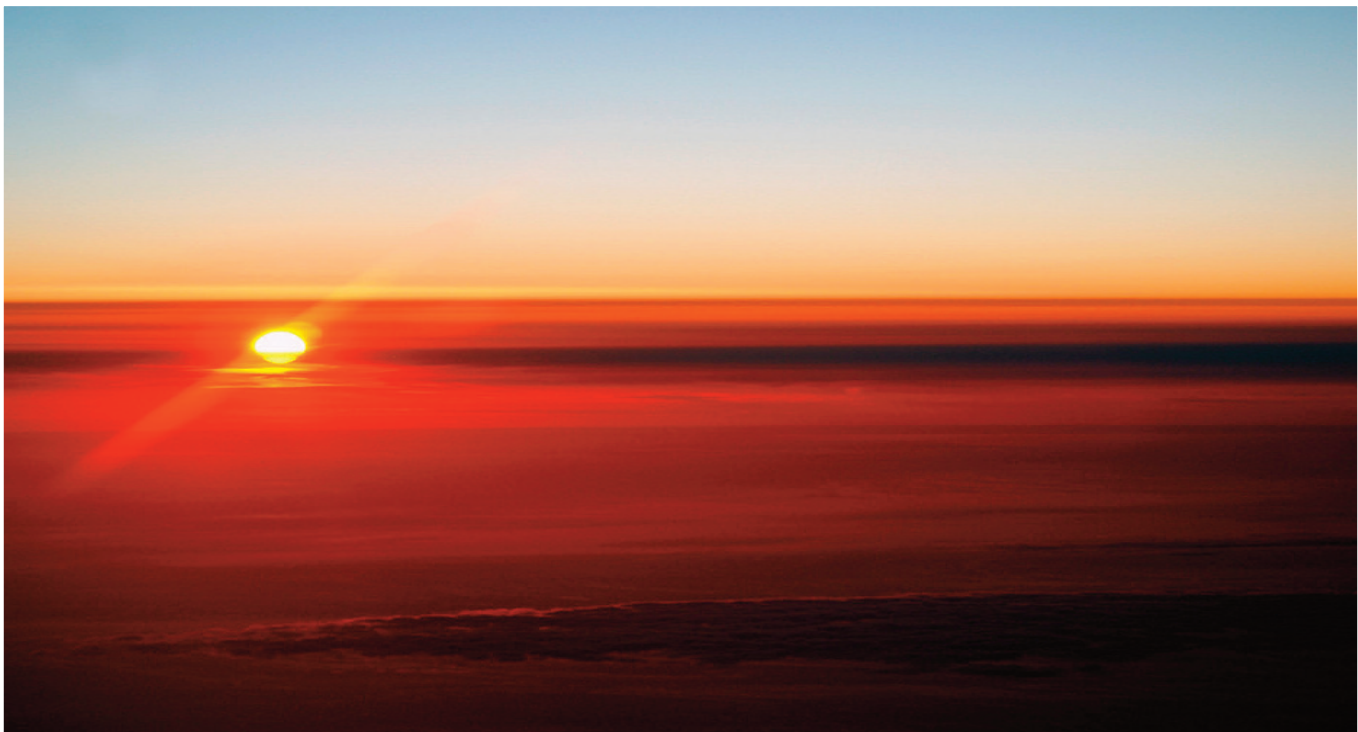
What is the point of launching oneself into missionary work, of making it a showcase exhibit and a self-seeking exercise of power, if it doesn't highlight the presence of the Good Shepherd? What purpose is served, if you are sent, by supplanting the one who sends you and disconnecting yourself from him spiritually? You would simply become a mercenary or self-employed worker, or a runner who has strayed from the track.



Exercise 3:

Self-examination for a Congregation (and your own community within it), in which we are called to be “steadfast helpers in the ministry of the Word” (CC 6)

- Is the Congregation **exercising its mission there, where the Spirit has sent it**? Do we detect any resistance amongst us in the face of the movements of the Spirit which renews the earth? Do we try to impose our own points of view or do we let the Spirit reveal the will of God during this time?
- Do we look on the mission as no more than “ordinary work” or a “job”, or is it rather a **mystical experience** which leads us to acts and serve beyond the call of duty?
- Do we make ourselves **completely available for missionary work**, or do we refuse to consider anything that falls outside our own plans?
- Could the Easter experience prompt us **to return to Jerusalem**, just like the disciples from Emmaus, and from there to embark once again on the mission and its follow-up?
- **What is the charismatic and ministerial nature of my contribution to the mission of the Spirit?**
Do I add anything personal, do I respond to what the Congregation and the Church ask of me, do I contribute anything to improving the world?



5. Fifth Sunday: Jesus the way, the truth and the light.

Living the Easter experience, like one of Jesus' disciples, is equivalent to having Jesus as a buffer for your thoughts, decisions and actions.

At Easter time, the *Quid Prodest* becomes even more disquieting when, along with Thomas, Philip and anyone who wants to take life seriously, you try to address this fundamental question of judgment: "How can I know the way?" (Jn 14:5)

For every human being, travelling the journey of life is, and will be, the biggest challenge and, perhaps, this could be the thing to bring greatest satisfaction: being lucky enough to have found the right way.

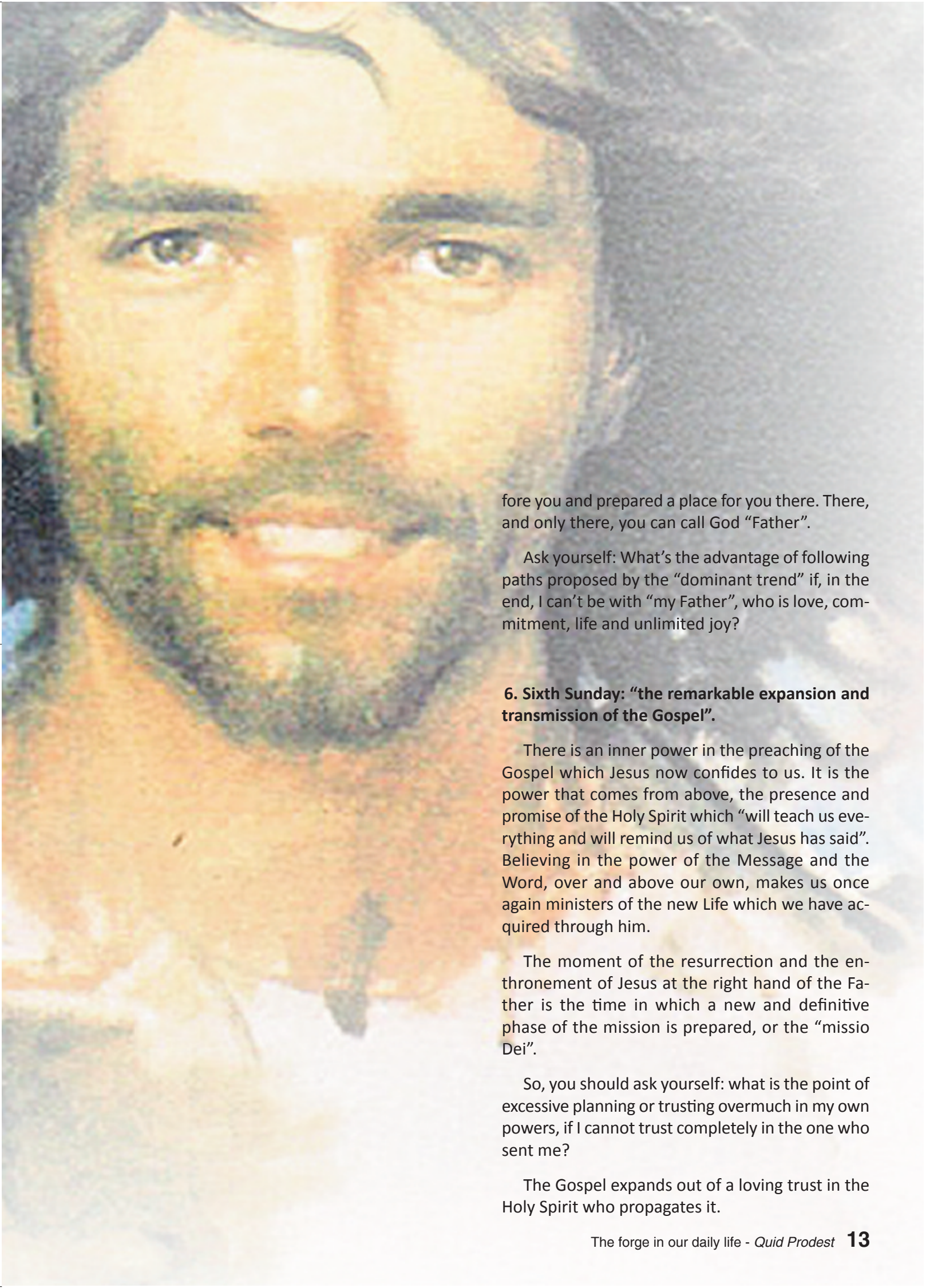
"I am the way, the truth and the life" Jesus says. If his disciples have been attentive to the words, signs and lifestyle of the Master, they won't have any fears, because all they have to do is follow in his footsteps, and do everything as the Master would have done it. This would be more than enough.

Nevertheless, the personal story of every human being highlights the diverse obstacles that impede our understanding for our choice of Jesus as the way. His proposal is puzzling and possibly causes fears to emerge, especially for those who prefer the familiar paths of routine.

As with the early disciples, Jesus wants to enthuse you with encouraging words: "Don't worry; I have a place prepared for you; wherever I am, you are there also".

And, where is Jesus? From the very first assertions of his mission, Jesus himself had said: "in my Father's house" (Lk 2:49). He wants you to be with him there: in the realm of love and life, in the field of commitment and service. There, there are plenty of dwellings (cf. Jn 14:2). He has gone be-





fore you and prepared a place for you there. There, and only there, you can call God “Father”.

Ask yourself: What’s the advantage of following paths proposed by the “dominant trend” if, in the end, I can’t be with “my Father”, who is love, commitment, life and unlimited joy?

6. Sixth Sunday: “the remarkable expansion and transmission of the Gospel”.

There is an inner power in the preaching of the Gospel which Jesus now confides to us. It is the power that comes from above, the presence and promise of the Holy Spirit which “will teach us everything and will remind us of what Jesus has said”. Believing in the power of the Message and the Word, over and above our own, makes us once again ministers of the new Life which we have acquired through him.

The moment of the resurrection and the enthronement of Jesus at the right hand of the Father is the time in which a new and definitive phase of the mission is prepared, or the “*missio Dei*”.

So, you should ask yourself: what is the point of excessive planning or trusting overmuch in my own powers, if I cannot trust completely in the one who sent me?

The Gospel expands out of a loving trust in the Holy Spirit who propagates it.

7. Ascension Sunday:

“It is better for you that I go”

“It is better for you that I go”. Jesus leaves room for the Spirit. He knows when the mission the Father entrusted to him will end. And he knows how to begin a new stage. He ascends to Abba, in Heaven. From there, they send the Holy Spirit to the Mission.

The presence of the Lord does not annul his absence. The Lord is in heaven: “he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father”. He continues making himself present until the end of the world, where two or three are gathered together in his name, thanks to the power of the Spirit. This presence/absence beckons us to pay homage to the “mystery of the faith”, to shout out “Marana Tha”, to proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes again.

In this context, it reminds us once again of the *Quid Prodest*: what is the purpose of committing oneself to a task, to a responsibility, to a service, if now is not your time or hour? You can block the arrival of the Spirit and his uniqueness when you think it absolutely necessary, when you assess everything from your own subjective standpoint.

8. Pentecost Sunday: “There is no monopoly. The Spirit is poured over everyone!”

This is the great gift of the Risen Lord, of Abba: the Promise is fulfilled. The Spirit that poured out in the Upper Room is also spread across the world. The community of the Spirit testifies to it in all humility and with great enthusiasm.

The resurrection could be understood as the event of the generation, by Abba, of a life without limits or terms. And just as has been revealed to us: Abba never conceives without his Spirit. Jesus dies surrendering his Spirit. Jesus rises from the dead receiving the Spirit.

The moment of the resurrection and the enthronement of Jesus at the right hand of the Father is the time when a new and definitive phase of the mission is prepared, or the “*missio Dei*”. After the “*consummatum est*” said by Jesus on the cross, we await the continuation of the “*missio Dei*”. Abba and the Risen Son send us the Spirit from heaven, which is poured out over the disci-



ples, men and women alike. The Spirit opens up the new phase of the mission. He puts it into action from the “*Jesu memory*”, and is activated by each of those obedient to him, they leave behind all their fears and they go out to bear witness to this hope.

We are currently in the period of the Spirit’s mission. It is the period in which the Spirit of Jesus relies on us, as humble collaborators. He sends us out to bear witness to the Easter event, to evoke the memory of Jesus. The Spirit launches us into missionary work in places where it is most urgent, timely and effective.

When we obediently fulfil the assignment, when we complete our work like faithful envoys and adhere to the will of him who consecrates us and sends us, then we live the Easter message in all its powerful force. We then become the communicators of the Life event that is to renew the world.

Through our Congregation, our communities, and each one of us, the Holy Spirit carries out its mission. We need to rise to Claret’s experience: the Spirit of our Father and our Mother acts in us and through us. This awareness frees us from op-

pression, from tyranny, from the seeking out our own interests or prestige. He who lets himself be moved by the Spirit is a child of God, one of God's missionaries.

Within the Congregation, we carry out the work of the Spirit within the ministerial and charismatic role of the ordained priest, or within the charismatic role of the lay brotherhood. Amongst the ordained Claretian ministers (whether priests or deacons) there is clear evidence of the continuity of the Church's apostolic roots and of the delivery of Jesus' commitment and service to the community. The Good Shepherd, who looks after the church, is made manifest and works through us. Brothers and Students alike are also ministers of the Spirit which "comes and goes mysteriously", but which gives credibility to the event of the Resurrection of the dead and leads us to the fullness of life.



Easter is a time for becoming vividly aware of our mission and for discovering the will of the one who has sent us.

The highpoint of Easter at Pentecost is, once more, the opportunity to ask yourself the question from *Quid Prodest*: what good is knowledge, your ability as a leader and your success, if you are not connecting with the Spirit through a permanent state of spirituality? If the Spirit is love, how would you benefit from the most sublime gifts if you didn't have love?

Exercise 4: The liturgical path of Easter

- What are **my feelings** when faced with the liturgical programme of Easter time? Do I look at it from the point of view of quantity or quality?
- Do I see this period as **a true Easter kairos** for myself and for my brothers in the community?
- Am I happy to allow myself **to be touched by the Risen Lord**, or do I avoid contact with him? Am I prepared to wait patiently for him to show himself or do I want to impose my own conditions?
- Is it possible to detect **an Easter atmosphere in my community**, or simply a secular one that does not attract Grace?
- Can I truly **bear witness to the Resurrection**? Can I confirm that the Risen Lord has really touched my life?



With Mary, in the Church-Bride which says: Come!

A large section of Easter time coincides with the month of May, the month of Mary. The month which reminds us that, for Claret, she was “mother, godmother, teacher, head teacher, in fact everything after Jesus” (Aut 5).

Living the Easter experience, in keeping with *Quid Prodest*, and allowing yourself to be directed by Mary, will help you to gain the confidence of knowing that you are not walking alone. She, a woman of belief, placed by the spirit of God at the critical crossroads of history, will teach you to ask the question: “How can this be?” (Lk 1:34). And she herself will be the “teacher” who will instruct you not to conform to established patterns, to discard all fear and to take decisions that will lead you to give decisive answers, along the road of your future life.

During Easter, don't forget to greet her in the Church's traditional manner, by singing: *Regina Coeli, laetare...* Rejoice! Mary, as you yourself an-

nounced in the “Magnificat” (Lk 1:47). Be happy, because it is through you that we can prove the blessedness of him who, having wept, is now finally laughing. Be happy, because your consolation is great (Mt 5:4, Lk 6:21) and because there is no greater happiness than the triumph of Life itself: the very reason you are bearing a son in your womb. Be happy, because the pain caused by your “Fiat” has been worthwhile, because your dreams, your exhaustion and your suffering now find an explanation in God's merciful plan.

Along with her, you too, a pilgrim heading towards the final Easter, scream out to the Church-Bride and to the Spirit: Come! In this way, your judgement and your search, your *Quid Prodest*, will begin to make sense. Trust that he, at all your crossroads and forever, will say: “Yes, I am coming soon. Amen” (Ap 22: 17.20)



Exercise 5: Holy Mary of the *Quid Prodest*

At least during the month of May, **when you are praying the rosary**, stop and consider what is meant, at the crossroads in your life, to say to the Virgin Mary: “Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death”



3. For the community meeting

1. This could take place just before or immediately after the feast of Pentecost. Each person will bring their Spiritual Directory, the bible, their “Utopian journal” and the plant that has been sown and cared for during these past days of Easter.

2. Create an atmosphere of prayer marked by the joy of the Spirit's presence. Tend to the adornments and symbols: statues, candles, colours. Find a statue of the virgin.

3. You can start with the following INVOCATIONS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Reader: Let's start our celebration with a solemn invocation. As a community gathered around Mary, we beg for the gift of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us his gifts and, with them, to comfort and fortify us.

Lord, send your Spirit to break our shackles.

Lord, send your Spirit to break down our barriers.

Lord, send your Spirit to break down our prejudices.

Everyone sings: Holy Spirit, come, come (three times) in the name of Jesus (or other appropriate)

Lord, send your Spirit to heal our wounds.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we may grow close to everyone.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might see the face of our brother in other people.

Chant: (refrain)

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might work on behalf of peace.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might see what unites us.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might be unified as one.

Chant: (refrain)

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might establish an atmosphere of forgiveness and communication.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might pardon our own debts.

Lord, send your Spirit so that we might overcome war, racism and inequality amongst men.

Chant: (refrain)

In place of the previous invocations, you can intone the sequence: “Veni Sancte Spiritus” (Sp. Dir. No 143) or some other appropriate chant.

This invocation is concluded with a prayer from the “Spiritual Directory CMF”, for example: Nos. 10, 37 or 38.

4. The leader of the session should invite those present to think about the following:

We celebrate the presence of the Spirit in the life of the church, the Congregation and our community.

It is the Spirit that hovers above the waters when the earth is created (Gen 1:2)

It is the Spirit that Jesus “breathed” over the faithful community from the cross (Jn 19:30b) and over the enclosed disciples, the night of the resurrection (Jn 20:22).

It is the Spirit that recreates the community and sends it out to bear witness to the faith and the hope embodied in Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff).

It is the Spirit that encouraged St Anthony Mary Claret and, with the power of his love (water, fire, air) he chooses to mould us like the iron in a forge, and sends us out to communicate the message of life (cf. Aut 342)

It is the Spirit that, during this period of Easter and “in our daily lives”, has formed in each one of us a “New Man” in the image of the Risen Jesus.

5. The following can be read out: Jn 20:19-20 or Acts 2: 1-13

6. Allow a moment of silence, possibly with soft music in the background which evokes the presence of the Holy Spirit.

7. When opportune, ask each one, based on their “Utopian journal”, to share the details of an event of grace experienced during the days of Easter. It could be related to the bible text just read, with one of the suggested exercises in the booklet,

or with one of the questions which has engendered some reflection. After the shared discussion, each should place the notebook with their “Utopian journal” beneath the altar or in a central spot where the celebration is taking place (at the end, each one will pick up their own).

8. When the period of sharing is finished, you could intone another appropriate chant.

9. If each person has brought the seed that has been planted during this period, it could be immediately presented before the altar or before a statue of the Lord and, at the same time, a prayer of intercession could be said for the successful flowering of the *Forge project in our daily life* within the community.

10. Pray for the Virgin Mary’s intercession (for example, with a Hail Mary) and you can finish by singing the antiphon *Regina Coeli* or some other appropriate chant.



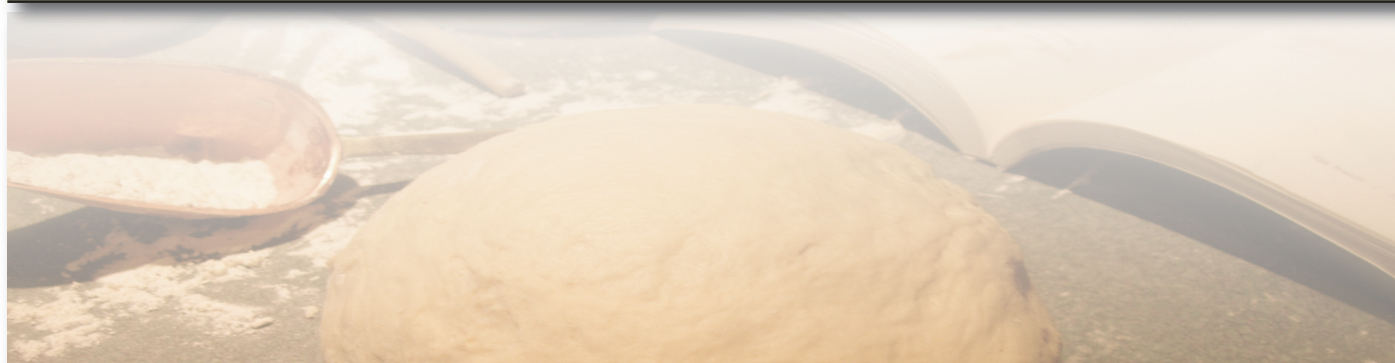
4. Suggestions for the *Lectio Divina* each day

<p>Sunday 24th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 10.34-43. • Psalm 117. • Col 3.1-4, o • 1Cor 5.6b-8. • Jn 20.1-9 	<p>Easter Sunday</p>	<p>God invites you on a journey of faith at the crossroads of life. Learn how to discover signs of death in the bud of life. Where the unsuspecting disciple experiences the emptiness of the tomb, the disciple who dearly loves the Lord, discovers the deeper expression of life.</p>
<p>Monday 25th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.14-22. • Psalm 22. • Mt 28.8-15 	<p>Monday of the Easter Octave St Mark, Evangelist. [Martyrdom of Fr Andrew Solá and companions]</p>	<p>The resurrection of Jesus has no better proof than the experience itself, centred on love. Only this love will allay the fears of those who follow one who has been condemned and defeated, committing him to specific actions of devotion and promotion.</p>
<p>Tuesday 26th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.36-41 • Sal 32 • Jn 20.11-18 	<p>Tuesday of the Easter Octave.</p>	<p>Mary Magdalene represents the community- the bride prepared to ascend to the Father with the Bridegroom. The engagement has been arranged, but the union will ultimately be made when you have walked the path of Jesus, proclaiming the kingdom and suffering for its cause.</p>
<p>Wednesday 27th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 3.1-10 • Psalm 104 • Lk 24.13-35 	<p>Wednesday of the Easter Octave.</p>	<p>Emmaus indicates the conversion of the disciples who share with the Master the table of the Word and the Eucharist. There, minds are opened up and hearts are inflamed. The breaking of bread is the key moment of this meeting of faith and life.</p>
<p>Thursday 28th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 3.11-26 • Psalm 8 • Lk 24.35-48 	<p>Thursday of the Easter Octave</p>	<p>The experience of the Resurrection encourages the community to share the greater good: conversion and forgiveness of sins. This transformation also makes it opportune for you to experience the birth of the new and reconciled human being.</p>
<p>Friday 29th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 4.1-12 • Psalm 117 • Jn 21.1-14 	<p>Friday of the Easter Octave. [St Catherine of Siena, co-patron (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 101-107)]</p>	<p>Making your mind up in life depends on obedience to the Word of Jesus. His is a message of love that demands boldness and commitment. It provides guidance so that you decide on the very thing he entrusts to you: the mission to bear witness, and in the celebration of the Eucharist, to do it in memory of him.</p>
<p>Saturday 30th April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 4.13-21 • Psalm 117 • Mk 16.9-15 	<p>Saturday of the Easter Octave.</p>	<p>Disbelief and doubt, typical when making decisions at the crossroads (<i>Quid Prodest</i>), are present on the path of faith, along which the disciples of the risen one have to travel. Still, he remains confident in you and sends you to bear witness to the good news of life.</p>

<p>Sunday 1st May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.42-47 • Psalm 117 • 1Pe 1.3-9 • Jn 20.19-31 	<p>Sunday of the Easter Octave.</p>	<p>The absence of Jesus in the disciple's life darkens everything. It is "night-time" and "the doors are closed" generating fear for the task of bearing witness to the Gospel. In this situation of uncertainty, only he, by pure grace, can communicate peace and joy to you.</p>
<p>Monday 2nd May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 4.23-31 • Psalm 2 • Jn 3.1-8 	<p>Monday 2nd week of Easter. Memorial of St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor</p>	<p>"To be born again", this is Jesus' Easter programme. How much are you in need of a real revival in your faith, in your love, in your hope, in your ability to take risks in everything that blocks out your missionary identity?</p>
<p>Tuesday 3rd May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1Cor 15.1-8 • Psalm 18 • Jn 14.6-14 	<p>Tuesday 2nd week of Easter. Feast of Sts. Philip and James, apostles and co-patrons (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 111-117)</p>	<p>Truly, Jesus is for you the way, the truth and the life? Are you convinced that to get to the Father, you have to travel his road of commitment and faith, expressed in works of limitless love?</p>
<p>Wednesday 4th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 5.17-26 • Psalm 33 • Jn 3.16-21 	<p>Wednesday 2nd week of Easter.</p>	<p>The great gift of God, in His Son Jesus, is nothing but proof of his unconditional love for the world, a blessing from his creative hands. This world with you in it, couldn't have any other vocation, but the fullness of life, salvation.</p>
<p>Thursday 5th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 3.11-26 • Psalm 8 • Lk 24.35-48 	<p>Thursday 2nd week of Easter.</p>	<p>Jesus, sent by God, and you with him, can only speak the Word of God. He can only bear witness to the truth, to love and to hope. He can only be a herald of salvation for all. What's the point of resisting the gospel, if you miss out on the offer of life in all its fullness?</p>
<p>Friday 6th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 5.34-42 • Psalm 26 • Juan 6.1-15 	<p>Friday 2nd week of Easter.</p>	<p>The bread that Jesus multiplies for you in the Eucharist (his Word and his body), remains his own generous gift to satisfy your hunger for infinity. Will you be able to contribute "your bread and your fish" so that the miracle of life continues to take place?</p>
<p>Saturday 7th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 6.1-7 • Psalm 32 • Jn 6.16-21 	<p>Saturday 2nd week of Easter [Canonization of St Anthony Mary Claret]</p>	<p>"It is I, fear not." The Master continues to encourage you to overcome the fears that follow you into the boat. What advantage will there be in continuing to fight the storms, all by yourself, if you lose the opportunity to be with the person who can give you peace and confidence?</p>

<p>Sunday 8th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.14.22-33 • Psalm 15 • 1Pe 1.17-21 • Lk 24.13-35 	<p>3rd Sunday of Easter</p>	<p>Fear, disbelief, and systematic doubt prevent you from recognizing, loving and following Jesus. What advantage is there in keeping your mind closed to the understanding of the mystery, if you lose the opportunity to "touch" the messenger of peace and joy?</p>
<p>Monday 9th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 6.8-15 • Psalm 118 • Jn 6.22-29 	<p>Monday 3rd week of Easter.</p>	<p>What are your heart's reasons for following the path of Jesus? What is the point of seeking out the Master at your own convenience, if you lose the food of the enduring values that give eternal life?</p>
<p>Tuesday 10th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 7.51-8,1a • Psalm 30 • Jn 6.30-35 	<p>Tuesday 3rd week of Easter. Memorial of St. John of Avila, priest and mission- ary (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 127-133)</p>	<p>Lord! Always satisfy our hunger with the bread of heaven. It is you who can bear witness to the Kingdom and its justice. It is only through you that we will satisfy our hunger for love and the deepest longings for happiness.</p>
<p>Wednesday 11th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 5.17-26 • Psalm 33 • Jn 3.16-21 	<p>Wednesday 3rd week of Easter.</p>	<p>"Those who come to me, will not be turned away" Can there be better news than this? Jesus assures you that the will of the Father is to give eternal life through His Son. Experience the comfort of these words at the crossroads of life.</p>
<p>Thursday 12th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 8.26-40 • Psalm 65 • Jn 6.44-51 	<p>Thursday 3rd week of Easter.</p>	<p>It will not be your own feeble efforts that will lead you into communion with Jesus, but the Father's compassionate action that will attract you. You will not ignore his calls.</p>
<p>Friday 13th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 9.1-20 • Psalm 116 • Jn 6.52-59 	<p>Friday 3rd week of Easter.</p>	<p>What good is there in an arrogant presumption of believing, based on human traditions and laws, that you are already saved, if you lose communion with Jesus and with the body of your community? Only through Christ, with Him and in Him, will you find resurrection and life. Only in the bread of life will you find the answer to your uncertainties.</p>
<p>Saturday 14th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 1.15-17.20-26 • Psalm 112 • Jn 15.9-17 	<p>Saturday 3rd week of Easter. Feast of St. Ma- thias, apostle and co-patron (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 135-139). Death of Vene- rable Fr Avel- lana, (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 141-147)</p>	<p>Love, and only love, is the offer made by the Father in Jesus. "Staying in that love" will be the disciple-friend's challenge, which will be achieved by obeying his commandments. What is the advantage of becoming a "slave" to other interests, if you lose the only friend that can give you joy?</p>

<p>Sunday 15th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.14a.36-41 • 1Pe 2.20b-25 • Psalm 22 • Jn 10.1-10 	<p>4th Sunday of Easter</p>	<p>"I am the good shepherd ... I am the gate ... I have come that they may have life," What is the point of being distracted by other voices, if they do not lead you to abundant life?</p>
<p>Monday 16th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 11.1-18 • Psalm 41 • Jn 10.11-18 	<p>Monday 4th week of Easter.</p>	<p>The Good Shepherd gives his life for his sheep. Do not think like a paid employee or as a master who only seeks to take advantage of them. Do you sense the presence of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, who has given his life for you? Do you have the same feelings in the missionary work that has been entrusted to you?</p>
<p>Tuesday 17th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 11.19-26 • Psalm 86 • Jn 10.22-30 	<p>Tuesday 4th week of Easter.</p>	<p>At the crossroads of life there will definitely be doubts and uncertainties. My faith in Jesus: is it real? Or is it an illusion? What good is extreme rationalism, if you lose peace of mind and trust, if you no longer hear his voice in the simple things of life?</p>
<p>Wednesday 18th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 12.24-13,5 • Psalm 66 • Jn 12.44-50 	<p>Wednesday 4th week of Easter.</p>	<p>Whoever believes in Jesus, will not be confined to darkness. The Easter light illuminates his way, becoming more and more like him who, being the light, loves the poor and the children; he heals, blesses and consoles the sick.</p>
<p>Thursday 19th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 13.13-25 • Psalm 88 • Jn 13.16-20 	<p>Thursday 4th week of Easter.</p>	<p>Getting ready to "enter into the forge," remember that in the community of Jesus' disciples, no one is "Lord" over the others, but the servant. Blessed are you if you understand these things and practice them. Your communion with others will make sense.</p>
<p>Friday 20th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 13.26-33 • Psalm 2 • Jn 14.1-6 	<p>Friday 4th week of Easter.</p>	<p>I am going to prepare a place for you, says Jesus. But first, like the iron bar, you have to let him mould you. He is the way, the truth and the life. It is only through him that you will enter the Father's House.</p>
<p>Saturday 21st May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 13.44-52 • Psalm 97 • Jn 14.7-14 	<p>Saturday 4thweek of Easter.</p>	<p>The best way to truly know God, is to know Jesus. What is the point of all human knowledge and the whole of theology, if you lose close, living and affectionate contact with the one who helps you discover the love of the Father?</p>



<p>Sunday 22nd May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 32 • 1Pe 2.4-9 • Jn 14.1-12 	<p>5th Sunday of Easter.</p> <p>[Memorial of St. Joachina Vedruna, foundress of the Carmelite Sisters of Charity (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 149-155)]</p>	<p>“Let not your heart be troubled (...) I am the way, the truth and the life.” If you walk where Jesus guides you (in truth, justice, reconciliation and true love) fears will disappear and you will dwell in the house of his Father.</p>
<p>Monday 23rd May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 14.5-18 • Psalm 113 • Jn 14.21-26 	<p>Monday 5th week of Easter.</p>	<p>“The Protector who will send the Father, will teach you and remind you of everything.” He is already doing his work within you when you hear his Word and fulfil his mandate: love others!</p>
<p>Tuesday 24th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 7.51-8,1a • Psalm 30 • Jn 6.30-35 	<p>Tuesday 5th week of Easter.</p>	<p>“I leave you peace, my peace I give you.” Here is the great gift of Jesus. What is the advantage of having inordinate desire and plans for power, possession and prestige, if you lose the peace of mind based on justice and fraternity?</p>
<p>Wednesday 25th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 15.1-6 • Psalm 121 • Jn 15.1-8 	<p>Wednesday 5th week of Easter</p> <p>[St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, virgen (<i>Calendario</i>, pp. 157-162)]</p>	<p>What advantage is there in thinking you are a follower of Jesus, if you're not bound to him by listening to His Word, by your communion with him, through prayer and the fire that drives you to be motivated by the cause?</p>
<p>Thursday 26th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 15.7-21 • Psalm 95 • Jn 15.9-11 	<p>Thursday 5th week of Easter. Memorial of St. Philip Neri, priest</p>	<p>“Abide in my love.” The Father's love through his Son, the love of Jesus through his disciples, the love that he has for you and through you, for his entire community. To love as the Father and Son love each other, that is the source of true happiness.</p>
<p>Friday 27th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 15.22-31 • Psalm 56 • Jn 15.12-17 	<p>Friday 5th week of Easter.</p>	<p>It's not just about loving in any old way, but as Jesus did. His generosity and boundless dedication make you consider yourself, not as a servant, but as a friend. Ask only one thing: let yourself be guided by his mandates and, paradoxically, they will liberate and give you life.</p>
<p>Saturday 28th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 16.1-10 • Psalm 99 • Jn 15.18-21 	<p>Saturday 5th week of Easter.</p>	<p>The current “damage” suffered by the Church, the loss of its power, privileges and human prestige, was predicted by Jesus. Are you willing to continue adhering to it, despite the pressure of the “alternative society” pressing down upon it?</p>

<p>Sunday 29th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 8.5-8.14-17 • Psalm 65 • 1Pe 3.15-18 • Jn 14.15-21 	<p>6th Sunday of Easter</p>	<p>"I will not leave you orphans ..." The Father will give you another Consoler. What advantage is there in putting all your trust in yourself or in human assurances, if you lose the peace that the great gift of God bestows on you: the Spirit, the power of his love?</p>
<p>Monday 30th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 16.11-15 • Psalm 149 • Jn 15.26-16,4a 	<p>Monday 6th week of Easter.</p>	<p>The Spirit promised by Jesus, will defend the disciple from lies, mediocrity and cowardice. Pray for it with confidence, he always comes to you, he will help you to live in a state of watchful enlightenment.</p>
<p>Tuesday 31st May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sof 3.14-18, or, Rom 12.9-16b • Psalm, (Is 12.2-6) • Lk 1.39-56 	<p>Feast of the Visitation of the Most Holy Mary.</p>	<p>Two pregnant women are about to "give birth" to a new story. This piece of news must be spread about so as to encourage "leaps of joy." The Lord has come to notice you too. Also through you he wants to continue doing "great things" and transform the fortunes of the humble.</p>
<p>Wednesday 1st June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 17.15.22-18,1 • Psalm 148 • Jn 16.12-15 	<p>Wednesday 6th week of Easter. Memorial of St. Justin, martyr.</p>	<p>There are still many things that Jesus wants to say. But for now, he makes do with the light given by the Spirit. Do you pray for it? Do you allow yourself to be guided by him? Do you let him still make use of you to continue preaching the Word of Jesus?</p>
<p>Thursday 2nd June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 18.1-8 • Psalm 97 • Jn 16.16-20 	<p>Thursday 6th week of Easter.</p>	<p>When sadness fills your heart, when your assurances seem to fail you, when you experience the "absence of God" in your uncertainty, have confidence in the Spirit of Jesus. Your sorrow will turn into joy.</p>
<p>Friday 3rd June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 18.9-18 • Psalm 46 • Jn 16.20-23a 	<p>Friday 6th week of Easter. Memorial of St. Charles Lwanga and compa- nions, martyrs.</p>	<p>If your missionary vocation is dogged by suffering and adversity, bear in mind that, when you live it in union with Christ, it will contain unexpected fruits. The pregnant woman knows what this means. Giving birth to the Kingdom of God involves pain and suffering.</p>
<p>Saturday 4th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 18.23-28 • Psalm 46 • Jn 16.23b-28 	<p>Saturday 6th week of Easter.</p>	<p>Learn to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, united to him. He has left this world and lives with the Father to intercede on your behalf. Have trust. At the crossroads of this world, you are not alone.</p>



<p>Sunday 5th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 1,1,11 • Psalm 46 • Ef 1.17-23 • Mt 28.16-20 	<p>7th Sunday of Easter. Ascension of the Lord</p>	<p>"I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Can there be more dependable words of consolation and hope? They will elicit only one answer, adopting the missionary challenge into which you have been cast: go out, spread the news, and bear witness to the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Monday 6th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 19.1-8 • Psalm 67 • Jn 16.29-33 	<p>Monday 7th week of Easter.</p>	<p>If at the crossroads of life, you experience the truth of the words of Jesus, ask yourself: what's the use of forsaking the Lord if, besides losing peace of mind, I lose the courage to face up to the "world" with him?</p>
<p>Tuesday 7th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 20.17-27 • Psalm 67 • Jn 17.1-11a 	<p>Tuesday 7th week of Easter.</p>	<p>Do you feel united with Jesus? Are you one of "his people"? Take courage! You are entrusted to Him by the Father. Through Jesus, the one sent by the Father, you are getting to know the Father and you are within reach of eternal life. This is the "Gloria" that nobody can take away from you.</p>
<p>Wednesday 8 de June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 20.28-38 • Psalm 67 • Jn 17.11b-19 	<p>Wednesday 7th week of Easter.</p>	<p>If at your crossroads you choose Jesus and his cause, fill yourself with hope. He prays to the Father for you, so that you will not be misled by "the world" and its negative values. He does not want you to be "ex-communicated," but to be in the same communion with the Trinity. Consecrated in truth.</p>
<p>Thursday 9th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 22.30, 23.6-11 • Psalm 15 • Jn 17.20-26 	<p>Thursday 7th week of Easter.</p>	<p>Communion, a mystery of love and life, can only have a missionary purpose: "to make the world believe." What advantage is there in being the leader yourself, if you lose your union with the Father, with Jesus and with your brothers?</p>
<p>Friday 10th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 25,13-21 • Psalm 102 • Jn 21,15-19 	<p>Friday 7th week of Easter.</p>	<p>"Do you love me more than these?" Your denials of the past are of no importance. Today you have an opportunity for true conversion, to love without limit, to rebuild the road to follow, to collaborate with him bringing to the world peace and reconciliation.</p>
<p>Saturday 11th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 11.21b-26,13,1-3 • Psalm 97 • Mt 10.7-13 	<p>Saturday 7th week of Easter. Feast of St. Barnabas, apostle and co- patron</p>	<p>If you've opted for Jesus, you have a mission: to proclaim that the Kingdom is at hand and fight for a world that is "healthier", more human, more focused on the disadvantaged. This mission can only be the work of the unconditional love that comes from God.</p>
<p>Sunday 12th June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 2.1-11 • Psalm 103 • 1Cor 12.,3b-7.12-13 • Jn 20.19-23 	<p>Pente- chost Sunday</p>	<p>Let the "Ruah" of God, breathed into you, give rise to new life. Let it "make all things new." Let it cancel out faults and foster forgiveness. What advantage is there living hemmed in and fearful, when you lose many opportunities for peace, reconciliation and hope?</p>

5. To go deeper

Appendix I: THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE WORLD AND THE PROTECTION OF CREATION (BENEDICT XVI, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, n. 92)

Finally, to develop a profound eucharistic spirituality that is also capable of significantly affecting the fabric of society, the Christian people, in giving thanks to God through the Eucharist, should be conscious that they do so in the name of all creation, aspiring to the sanctification of the world and working intensely to that end. (249) The Eucharist itself powerfully illuminates human history and the whole cosmos. In this sacramental perspective we learn, day by day, that every ecclesial event is a kind of sign by which God makes himself known and challenges us. The eucharistic form of life can thus help foster a real change in the way we approach history and the world. The liturgy itself teaches us this, when, during the presentation of the gifts, the priest raises to God a prayer of blessing and petition over the bread and wine, "fruit of the earth," "fruit of the vine" and "work of human hands." With these words, the rite not only includes in our offering to God all human efforts and activity, but also leads us to see the world as God's creation, which brings forth everything we need for our sustenance. The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized

simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God's good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:4-12). The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. (250) The relationship between the Eucharist and the cosmos helps us to see the unity of God's plan and to grasp the profound relationship between creation and the "new creation" inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ, the new Adam. Even now we take part in that new creation by virtue of our Baptism (cf. Col 2:12ff.). Our Christian life, nourished by the Eucharist, gives us a glimpse of that new world – new heavens and a new earth – where the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven, from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2).

Appendix II: ALTHOUGH IT IS NIGHT (St. John of the Cross)

*For I know well the spring that flows and runs,
although it is night.*

*1. That eternal spring is hidden,
for I know well where it has its rise,
although it is night.*

*2. I do not know its origin, nor has it one,
but I know that every origin has come from it,
although it is night.*

*3. I know that nothing else is so beautiful,
and that the heavens and the earth drink there,
although it is night.*

*4. I know well that it is bottomless
and no one is able to cross it,
although it is night.*

*5. Its clarity is never darkened,
and I know that every light has come from it,
although it is night.*

*6. I know that its streams are so brimming
they water the lands of hell, the heavens, and earth,
although it is night.*

*7. I know well the stream that flows from this spring
is mighty in compass and power,
although it is night.*

*8. I know the stream proceeding from these two,
that neither of them in fact precedes it,
although it is night.*

*9. This eternal spring is hidden
in this living bread for our life's sake,
although it is night.*

*10. It is here calling out to creatures;
and they satisfy their thirst, although in darkness,
because it is night.*

*11. This living spring that I long for,
I see in this bread of life,
although it is night.*

Appendix III: AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE RISEN LORD (H. Nouwen)

Today we heard the story of the encounter between Jesus and Mary of Magdala, two people who love each other. Jesus says, "Mary." She recognises him and says, "'Rabboni,' which means Master" (John 20:16). This simple and deeply moving story brings me in touch with my fear as well as my desire to be known. When Jesus calls Mary by her name, he is doing much more than speaking the word by which everyone knows her, for her name signifies her whole being. Jesus knows Mary of Magdala. He knows her story: her sin and her virtue, her fears and her love, her anguish and her hope. He knows every part of her heart. Nothing in her is hidden from him. He knows her even more deeply and more fully than she knows herself. Therefore, when he utters her name he brings about a profound event. Mary suddenly realizes that the one who truly knows her truly loves her.

I am always wondering if people who know every part of me, including my deepest, most hidden thoughts and feelings, really do love me. Often I am tempted to think that I am loved only as I remain partly unknown. I fear that the love I receive is conditional and then say to myself, "If they really knew me, they would not love me." But when Jesus calls Mary by name he speaks to her entire being. She realizes that the one who knows her most deeply is not moving

away from her, but is coming to her offering her his unconditional love.

Her response is "Rabboni," "Master." I hear her response as her desire to have Jesus truly be her master, the master of her whole being: her thoughts and feelings, her passion and hope, even her most hidden emotions. I hear her say, "You who know me so fully, come and be my master. I do not want to keep you away from any part of myself. I want you to touch the deepest places of my heart so that I won't belong to anyone but you."

I sense that here, in this simple encounter, we can see a true religious moment. All fear is gone, and all has become love. And how better can this be expressed than by Jesus' words, "go and find my brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and Your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17). There is no longer any difference between Jesus and those whom he loves. They are part of the intimacy that Jesus enjoys with his Father. They belong to the same family. They share the same life in God.

What joy to be fully known and fully loved at the same time! It is the joy of belonging through Jesus to God and being there, fully safe and fully free.

Appendix IV: THE RECOGNITION (A. de Mello)

In my prayer today I face a vital question: who is Jesus Christ for me?

I begin by imagining myself to be in his presence, a presence that allows me to be totally myself.

I then conduct a dialogue with him, taking for subject matter the titles scripture gives him.

The first one is connected with his name: **Saviour**.

Has Jesus been a saviour to me? In what circumstances? On what occasions?

When I address him by this title, what meaning does it have?

I share with him my answers to these questions. He responds.

Another title scripture bestows on him is **Lord**.

I tell him what it means to me to call him Lord and he comments.

The scriptures call him **Teacher**.

I ponder on the lessons he has taught me and ask him how he sees my role as pupil.

Here are titles Jesus gave himself: I am the **Resurrection** and the **Life**.

Can Jesus claim to be my life? What meaning does that have in my everyday existence?

He also gave himself the title: **Friend**:

'You are my friends because I have revealed everything I know to you.' What are these revelations he has made to me in friendship?

I put aside the Scriptures now and let my own heart express its own experience of him in a title of its own creation. And I observe how he responds to it.

Appendix V: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PRIEST TODAY (Karl Rahner)

There are people who yearn for the incomprehensibility and eternity of God. To these people the priest says that the most inconceivable optimism which you cannot even comprehend is actually your possibility, yes, even your most holy duty. You can be this because we have experienced the love of God in Jesus Christ.

I do not see why a priest of this vision could not overcome the crisis in today's priesthood. Naturally, all these things have been overshadowed by the triviality and the habitual nature of our life from which the priest also suffers. He is necessarily also the one who must constantly pray: I believe, Father, help my unbelief. He too must accomplish a breakthrough in hope — out of the banality of the mundane and into God's eternity. He cannot be a priest and be happy if he is not a spiritual person, if he does not always begin again — he need not do more than try. He must be a man of God, a man of experience with the Holy Spirit and a man of eternity. If he is not this, then the priesthood will be a terrible burden for him. But even if he is such a spiritually oriented person, it is also clear that he will experience disappointment in himself and in those to whom he preaches the word of God.

But this burden is not taken from laypeople and from those who think they would be freer and happier if they were to leave the priesthood. Disappointment, death, hardship, and the like are part of human life. It would indeed be sad if a priest were not to experience these as well. However, he should not be quick to blame all the above on the priesthood as such. He should rather ask: where is there one who does not experience disappointments in our times here on earth, ultimately at death?

It seems correct that today's priest no longer has certain functions which earlier made his life a bit easier and cheaper to live. Many of a priest's earlier duties have now disappeared, be it because others have taken them over, or be it because the priest no longer has the time and energy. He should not be disappointed in the priesthood because of this. He should reflect much more upon the real heart of the priesthood. There certainly must be men in our dreadfully banal and brutal society who nurse the fire of praise and love of God and who initiate others in the experience of God's mystery. Each one will be successful in his own way. Of course, a priest's religious potential and dynamic force is going to depend upon his talents and personal history. One should not turn up one's nose or look down upon even the smallest servant in God's kingdom who, true and faithful, proclaims the message of the New Testament through his priestly calling, even if this is done in a common, banal, traditional, and somewhat "burnt-out" manner. Every priest should always say to himself: Within the limits given you by God, you should be truly a prophet, a man of God, one moved by the fire of God. You should love God and your fellow man. You should proclaim the message of Jesus Christ in our time, as Paul said, be it convenient or inconvenient.

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