

**Holy Mass on the Easter Day of Lord's Resurrection  
(Venice / Cathedral Basilica of Saint Mark,  
on April the 4th, 2021)  
Homily of Patriarch Francesco Moraglia**

Dear, Sirs and Madames,

“The Lord is truly risen. Alleluia!”. The words of the entrance antiphon of this solemn Holy Mass bring back what is the true Christian paschal wish, that is, the Gospel, the best news we can exchange on Easter day.

Eastern Christians, on the Easter Day, they greet each other with these words: "The Lord has been raised!" (Χριστός Ανέστη). The short answer is realistic like the greeting: "Yes, He has been truly raised!"(ληθώς Ανέστη).

I address the same greeting to those who are in the Basilica this morning and to those who are following us on live broadcast of Antenna Tre Nordest or online through Gente Veneta Facebook page.

Despite all the limitations, distances and attention due, because of the ongoing pandemic, we have returned to celebrate Holy Week and Easter "face-to-face"; unfortunately last year it was not possible and this is a sign of hope, which we thank the Lord for.

We always bring, with real pain, to prayer those who - for a year now, until today - have been severely affected by the consequences of the coronavirus: many deaths, people (from the elderly to children), families and all categories that have lived and are experiencing serious suffering and difficulties, not only on a physical and emotional field but also due to the dramatic economic and employment repercussions of this pandemic.

We also remember, with gratitude, those who - in the exercise of their profession and their duties - have given themselves and still

do so with generosity and competence at the service of the community: doctors, nurses, social and health workers, police, volunteers, priests, men and women of religion, and so on.

For all, let the Easter wish full of hope resounds: "The Lord is truly risen. Alleluia!".

The joy and light of Easter is all here: Christian hope is not an empty word; it is an event that becomes a strong and engaging announcement, it is a real and happened action that continues to happen and, if welcomed by men, it changes life and history: "Truly the Lord has truly been raised " (Lk 24,34).

Yes, Christian hope cannot be reduced to a state of mind, to a psychological and emotional aim, linked to a particular moment and to the character of a person who could be optimistic, pessimistic or pragmatic. Nor is it something empty or illusory; rather it is a force that bursts into history with a dynamism that transforms and renews everything.

Professor Jürgen Moltmann, a Reformed theologian, writes in his "Theology of Hope": "It [Hope] does not take things as they are. But as things that advance, they move, they are transformed, in their possibilities "(Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, Brescia 1970,p.18).

Christian Hope therefore introduces us to the future. For those who welcome the news of Jesus Christ, the Risen One, it means going towards the One who is the beginning and the fulfillment, the fullness, the true happiness that nothing further can ever take over. "It's all finished!" (Jn 19,30): they were also the last words that the Evangelist John puts on the lips of Jesus on the cross.

Yes, everything is accomplished in the Risen Crucifix not because everything ends but because everything has reached its fullness in the history and thus the time of Hope is started, that is,

of the time of "already" and of "not yet".

However both, our personal adherence to Faith and our involvement in this "event" which today is still announced and given to us, are necessary. "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11,1), says the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, thus removing Christian hope from any psychological, cultural, philosophical and anthropological "frame".

Christian life, in its substance, is to participate in the admirable adventure of Christ and it takes place to the extent that we insert ourselves effectively into the reality of the "whole Christ", the Holy Church. In the Church, by living our belonging "objectively", we enter into a real relationship with the Risen Lord.

The second reading, just proclaimed (Colossians), exhorts us and urges us: "... if then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; think of what is above , not of what is on earth ... "(Col 3,1-2).

Yes, Christian hope is not just a wish and, before being a virtue, it is the very reality of the person of Jesus who is "truly risen". We, therefore, are called to stay where He is, to seek "things" that speak to us of Him, that show us Him, that make us live with Him and in Him; "... your life is hidden with Christ in God!"(Col 3,3).

At the same time, seeking and living "what is above, where Jesus Christ is" does not remove us from the commitments and duties of this world. Christian hope - as we have just said -, "founded" and "shaped" by Faith is never a pure flight forward, outside of reality, but it is always interwoven with charity: a full, alive, integral charity, in the concreteness of every moment and context that we are given to go through.

Yes, it is charity that guarantees this: our hope does not deceive. The three theological virtues - Faith, Charity and Hope -

refer to each other and support each other; we could say that they represent a "verification", an "evidence", a mutual "support".

At last, the Gospel we have heard (see Jn 20,1-9) introduces us the empty tomb: first of all, the dismay of Mary of Magdala who does not know how to go beyond the pain of what happened and of which she was an eyewitness, but of which she cannot grasp the meaning; then it tells us about the rush of Peter and John towards the empty tomb.

In this running, the two apostles depict the real character of Christian life which is a continuous "going towards": towards the Lord, precisely, towards the Risen One. And this going is never a simple and tired going but it is a rush, a run with decision and trepidation.

We remember well the other fast walking, almost running, which we find at the beginning of the Gospel when Mary - as soon as she received the announcement of the angel, the incarnation of Jesus - "set out and travelled to the hill in haste " to her cousin Elizabeth (see Lk 1,39).

Peter and John "both ran together" (Jn 20, 4). They want to go to Jesus, even if in a humanly convulsive and agitated way. Yes, going towards the Lord is the only possible competition between Lord's disciples. But it is a particular competition where there are those who are old and those who are young (and therefore gifted and in strength), those who run faster and therefore arrive first and those who, on the other hand, arrive later, but they wait for each other (banning all individualism) and, at last, they enter together to "see" and "believe". Thus it is necessary to be reached not only by the announcement but by the awareness of Faith that Jesus is the Risen One, the One who lives.

Then we understand how our mission as Christians in the world

flows from Faith in the Resurrection. Those who believe in Resurrection, those who "make" Easter of Resurrection, must let it radiate in all the fibers of their being and must know how to announce it to others with their high voice and the energy of their spirit. The Risen One invites us to set out - as far as our vocations allow us - the renewed world that He will bring to fulfillment.

Of this news, of this fact, of this hope "we are witnesses" (Acts 10,39); this is what Peter attests in the speech in the house of the centurion Cornelius, taken from today's first reading.

It is a hope that unifies past, present and future: Peter, as matter of fact, recalls the ancient testimony of the prophets and remembers that they themselves - the disciples, those who were with Jesus and who "ate and drank" with Him - can tell everything what He said and did, till to His death on the cross and till the Resurrection, made by the Father. At last, Peter announces his mission, that one of the Church of all times: to testify that Jesus of Nazareth, the Risen Crucified, "is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead" and "whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins through His name "(Acts 10, 42-43).

Faith, Love and Hope overcome all fear, even the hardships and fears of our time marked by so many uncertainties and sufferings.

The passing of time, the present and the future are marked in a new way because in our eyes history is entirely to be conceived and planned "in Christ", the Risen One who has already reached his fulfillment and He invites us to enter a time that , as mentioned before, it is punctuated by the "already" and the "not yet". "Christ, my hope, is risen ... Yes, we are sure: Christ has been truly raised": even the song of the Easter hymn brought us back to the core of Christian hope, that alive hope that joyfully leads us into the future.

May this hope - which Mary of Nazareth lived more than any other creature - sustain us today, in the difficult weeks and months that await us and may this hope be the foundation of our thinking, of our actions and of our planning, as believers and as citizens.

Help us Regina Coeli not to give in to the widespread sense of skepticism and relativism, to all the doubts cultivated and exalted as if they were strengths and fortunes. Please help us to become passionate seekers of what is true, of what "is", of what saves!

"The Lord has been truly raised. Alleluia!".

Happy Easter to everyone!