

Easter

SUNDAY



PASTORAL CHALLENGE:
Listen to the cry of the poor,
excluded, and discarded.



"The Church is at the service of bringing about this Holy City, through the proclamation and living of the Word, the celebration of the liturgy, fellowship, and service, especially to the poorest and those who most suffer, and thus as the leaven of the Kingdom it continues to transform the contemporary city in Christ." (Dap 516).





Encounter with the Word to illuminate life*



From the Holy Gospel according to Saint John 20, 1-9

“On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him. Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first, and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.””

“We let ourselves be illuminated”

**“for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.”
(Jhon 20,9)**

Those who learn from their mistakes are wise and those who repeat them are stupid, either individually or collectively. Even Jesus Christ himself could claim us, with good reason: "How little you understand and how slow your hearts are to believe everything

* For the biblical texts we use a translation offered by the Bible of the Church in America of CELAM.

that the prophets announced!" (Lk 24,24). It is difficult for us to learn from the ecological catastrophes and the genocidal massacres of recent history, that is why we close our eyes and ears, our hearts and minds (cf. Za 7,11) to those who defend peace, life, and fraternity, above the deafening noise of weapons and their deadly consequences.

Whoever lives the authentic Easter does not think about eating sweets but about listening integrally to the Word of life, the Life of the common house, and "the cry of the poor, excluded and discarded" (AEALC 7). Because the risen Jesus Christ repeats to us the greeting "peace be with you" (Jhon 20, 19.21.26), above uncertainty, violence, and the burial (with an individual tombstone or in mass graves).

Some find it difficult to understand that the Christian dynamic can never justify the fatalism of pain or death, nor should it break the fifth commandment "sin as a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission." Let us never accept being the material or intellectual authors, accomplices, or cover-ups of injustices, aggressions, and destruction; rather, we must live the Easter vocation to "create processes that affect the transformation of the causes of poverty and social insecurity" (AEALC, 6, b).

The Risen Lord, also the Crucified One, becomes the encounter through the paths of regression (Emmaus), triumphalism (Peter), repression (Paul), or deception (Ananias and Sapphira). He invites us to reread the Word from life, rather than fanaticizing ourselves with more or less biblical laws. It also urges us to "ensure that our theologies and pastoral practices encourage and facilitate listening to the cry of the poor, interacting with them, to make visible the new faces of the excluded" (AEALC 6a).



In the 21st century, those of us who believe in the Risen Christ are called to live the faith with parrhesia and with an incarnate biblical hermeneutic, which leads us to "welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees" (AEALC 14), as Pope Francis insists, again and again (cf. Palm Sunday Homily 2022), because "a globalization without solidarity negatively affects the poorest sectors" (DAp 65).

Because there are more "defenders of life" than perpetrators destroying life and dignity, Jesus of Nazareth is alive. Because the Lord Jesus has risen... there are "innumerable missionaries" of justice, peace, and life in all its integrality. Because "the Word becomes life" in our families, communities, and settings... Christ has risen from the dead." (cf. Jhon 20:9).



Reflection to impact life from the Pastoral Challenges

Ever since Medellin and Puebla, the preferential option for the poor has been a central characteristic of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean. To walk together in faith, we must include the millions of poor men and women on the continent in the communion of the People of God. Concerning this, Aparecida tells us that "the same adherence to Jesus Christ is what makes us friends of the poor and in solidarity with their destiny" (DAp 257), an indispensable and crucial characteristic of a truly synodal Church (DDC 9).

The life that Christ offers, and that includes the fullness of human existence, in its personal, family, spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions (cf. DAp 13), is concretized by the Church in an infinity of ways, among which are the preferential option for the poor, facing the challenge of misery, of the excluded, of the common good, of integral ecology and of the transformation "of structures, especially those that create injustices." (DI 4) (DDC 24) To welcome this life of God in our journey, "attentive listening to the cry of the poor and the earth at the same time (QAm, 52) is essential. (Cf. DDC 57)



Let us once again make our own the denouncement that was prophetically made in Aparecida: many times the poor are not only marginalized but also excluded and discarded. Certainly "in the defense of the rights of the excluded, the Church's faithfulness to Jesus Christ is at stake" (DAp 257) of which we are part. (Cf. DDC 16).

In this Easter of New Life, the great task of us the Church of the Risen Jesus will be to give renewed impetus to the proclamation of a dignified life for all, so that the missionary disciples may be promoters of liberation from all slavery and protagonists of the globalization of dignity, and, so that the excluded have more humane conditions (cf. DAp 399ss). This was pointed out in the listening process that we recently experienced: "the Church faces the great challenge of promoting the dignity of all people, not from a simplistic charity that is exhausted in simple alms, but as a promoter of humanity, of work and life with dignity and in the adequate conditions that we all deserve, regardless of color or race" (SN, p. 54). (DDC 26). Quite a challenge for this Easter season!



The challenge we all face to influence life

To face this challenge implies that during this Lent, we review our conversion process at the personal, community, pastoral and synodal levels with sincerity, recognizing that conversion must be practical, accompanied by concrete works, and not a mere speech.

Bearing in mind and heart the desire to promote the participation of the laity in spaces of cultural, political, social, and ecclesial transformation:

- What attitudes of Jesus do you think we should have to promote this participation?
- Do you remember any words of Pope Francis that guide us in the challenge of lay participation?
- What new defies does facing this challenge pose to the pastoral care of your community?
- What could you personally commit to promoting this lay participation in different spaces?

Let us take another step in our process of conversion, let us listen to the cry of the poor, excluded, and discarded. (Cfr. DAp 392)

- **From our conversion:** renew our preferential option for the poor (Cf. DAp 392)
- **From our community conversion:** develop the missionary dimension of life in Christ. The Church needs to be jolted to prevent it from becoming well established in comfort, stagnation, and lukewarmness, aloof from the suffering of the continent's poor. (Cf. DAp. 362)
- **From our pastoral conversion:** devote time to the poor, provide them kind attention, listen to them with interest, stand by them in the most difficult moments, choosing to spend hours, weeks, or years of our life with them, and striving to transform their situation from within their midst. (Cf. DAp 397)
- **Since our synodal conversion:** recognize as an important phenomenon in our time the emergence and spread of different forms of missionary volunteer service which are handling a variety of services. The Church supports national and international volunteer networks and programs, which in many countries have emerged within the realm of civil society organizations on behalf of our continent poorest people, in the light of the principles of dignity, subsidiarity, and solidarity, in accordance with the Church's social doctrine. (Cf. DAp. 372)



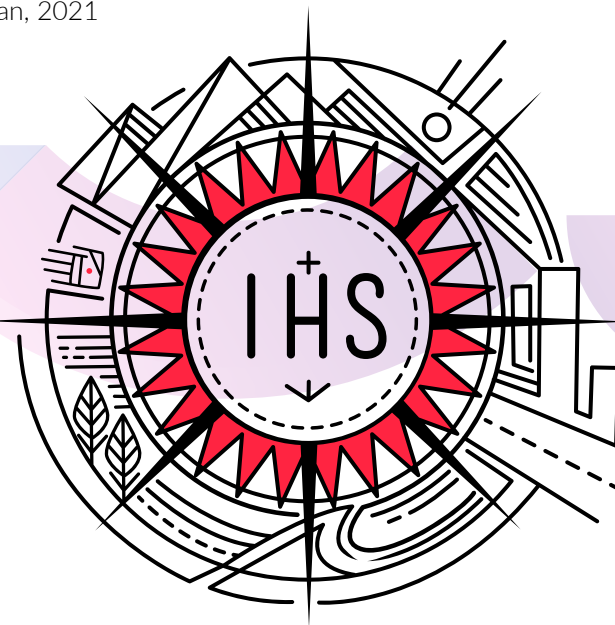
Celebrate life


Blessed are the hands that open
to welcome the poor and help them;
they are hands that bring hope.
Blessed are the hands that overcome barriers
of culture, religion, and nationality
spilling the oil of consolation
in the wounds of humanity.
Blessed are the hands that open
without asking for anything in return,
without “buts” or “conditions”:
they are hands that bring down
on the brothers the blessing of God. Amen

Francisco

ACRONYMS

- AEALC: Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
- CV: Christus Vivit, Papa Francisco
- DAP: Documento of Aparecida, 2007.
- DC: Documento para el camino. Asamblea Eclesial de América Latina y El Caribe, 2021
- DDC: Document for Community Discernment, Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
- DI: Inaugural Speech, Aparecida.
- EG: Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis.
- IN: Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI
- QAm: Dear Amazon, Pope Francis
- SA DF: Amazon Synod, Final Document.
- SN: Narrative Synthesis. Listening to the 1st Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021





“With her eyes on her children in their needs as at Cana of Galilee, Mary helps keep alive attitudes of attention, service, commitment, and selfless generosity that should distinguish the disciples of her Son. She also indicates what pedagogy should be used so that the poor “feel at home” in every Christian community.” (DAP 272).

Our Lady of the Rosary, patron saint of Guatemala