

The resurrection through the Holy Spirit

5th Sunday of Lent
Homily, 29th March 2020

Rom 8,8-11

father G. Paparone o.p.

If the Spirit of God, who has resuscitated Jesus from the dead, lives in you, He who has resuscitated Christ from the dead will as well give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you.

Dearest,

Today, the 5th Sunday of Lent, the Gospel offers a meditation on the resurrection of Lazarus, based on the Gospel of Saint John.

However, in this homily I prefer to offer you this central verse from the reflection of Saint Paul in his big letter to the Romans, where the Apostle exhorts the believers to become deeply aware of the change that Jesus has brought to the world: the gift of the Spirit and the action that the Holy Spirit, effused in our hearts by means of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, has to carry out: **giving us a new life, resurrecting us.**

But not on the last day! Not after death!

Resurrecting us starting from our present day.

A believer is he who has God's Spirit living in himself.

A believer is someone who has two spirits in his heart:

- the spirit of the world, the spirit of the flesh, of sin, of limitation,
- and the Spirit that comes directly from God.

A believer's whole activity in life consists of letting this Spirit of God grow in ourselves, so that He can give us a true and full life, an evangelical life.

We can't expect the Spirit to help our weaknesses or our material life; if this were the case, Christ would have died in vain!

In another context, Saint Paul says: if your hope is confined in the accomplishments of this world, Christ died in vain; *vain is my preaching and vain is your faith.*

What we find it hard to understand and to put into practice, and that for the Church it is not easy to teach us, is to live this life of God, this life that God wants us to live.

We are too focused on this world; the best we can aspire to is living honestly, or devoutly - where by devoutly I mean without sins...

However, Saint Paul also says: *even if I gave my body to be burnt, if I didn't have love, that would be useless.*

He then lists the attributes of love that define **a new, different and alternative human being.**

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A human being who is capable to live in communion with the others.

A human being who is capable to live not only for themselves but also for the others.

A human being who is capable to live not only for this world, but for the reign of God; not for their personal project, but for the project that God has for each of us.

The ultimate criterium of our life cannot be ourselves!

Because we are not the origin of our existence.

The criterium of our life must be that which comes from God.

We can live our lives authentically, if we live for God: for God the creator, for God the savior, for God the sanctifier and for God eternal beatitude.

The goal of our life must be the communion with the Lord.

This is the meaning of the resurrection from the dead!

Jesus on the cross has given His life to the Father and to humanity and, as part of this gift, He has resuscitated and inaugurated a new world; in the same way we can have access to this new world if we stop living only for ourselves and start living for God.

We must free our soul from the limitations of our thoughts, which, as much noble and beautiful as they can be, will always be limited, mundane...

We need to breath the Spirit of God!

It is not by chance that the Spirit is *Ruah*, *breath*, *air*.

We need to breathe into our lungs the air, the wind, the oxygen that comes from God.

This is the role of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is the breath of God, his *Ruah*.

Therefore, this breath of God can get into our spiritual lungs and finally enable us to live; otherwise, they will be in the same conditions as the lungs of those people who, in this epidemic, contract the *Covid-19*.

This virus attacks our lungs and prevents us from breathing; and we eventually die.

There is also a "spiritual Covid", which is the Devil, who is trying to prevent us from breathing the real life.

Let us then use this ventilator; **our oxygen is the word of God**. Let's use this mask through which we can breathe.

Let's wear the words of the Gospels, let's wear the Gospel, the evangelical mindset!

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Let us modify our thoughts; Jesus, when he started preaching, once said: *convert yourselves!* Change your mentality, leave aside your thoughts.

God reminds us through the prophet Isaiah: *my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are to your ways.*

Let us invoke the Holy Spirit then, let us ideally put ourselves in this situation: as if we were in a CPR, and we had to wear a ventilator to be able to breathe oxygen and be alive.

Let us try to nourish our spiritual life with the Spirit that comes from God.

May you all be able to long for welcoming the Spirit of God and living this spiritual life at its fullness.

May the Lord be praised.