



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE

St. Peter's Square

Wednesday, 23 April 2014

Video

“Why do you seek the living among the dead”?

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This week is the week of joy: we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. It is a true and deep joy founded on the certainty that the Risen Christ shall never die again; rather, he is alive and at work in the Church and in the world. This certainty has abided in the hearts of believers since that first Easter morning, when the women went to Jesus' tomb and the angels asked them: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Lk 24:5). “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. These words are like a milestone in history; but are also like a “stumbling block” if we do not open ourselves to the Good News, if we think that a dead Jesus is less bothersome than a Jesus who is alive! Yet how many times along our daily journey do we need to hear it said: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. How often do we search for life among inert things, among things that cannot give life, among things that are here today and gone tomorrow, among the things that pass away ... “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”.

We need this when we shut ourselves in any form of selfishness or self-complacency; when we allow ourselves to be seduced by worldly powers and by the things of this world, forgetting God and neighbour; when we place our hope in worldly vanities, in money, in success. Then the Word of God says to us: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. Why are you searching there? That thing cannot give you life! Yes, perhaps it will cheer you up for a moment, for a day, for a

week, for a month ... and then? “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. This phrase must enter into our hearts and we need to repeat it. Shall we repeat it three times together? Shall we make the effort? Everyone: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. [He repeats it with the crowd]. Today when we return home let us say it from the heart in silence and let us ask ourselves this question: why in life do I seek the living among the dead? It will do us good.

It is not easy to be open to Jesus. Nor is it a given that we shall accept the life of the Risen One and his presence among us. The Gospel shows us different reactions: that of the Apostle Thomas, that of Mary Magdalene and that of the two disciples of Emmaus: it does us good to compare ourselves with them. Thomas places a condition on belief, he asks to touch the evidence, the wounds; Mary Magdalene weeps, she sees him but she does not recognize him, she only realizes that it is Jesus when he calls her by name; the disciples of Emmaus, who are depressed and feeling defeated, attain an encounter with Jesus by allowing that mysterious wayfarer to accompany them. Each one on a different path! They were seeking the living among the dead and it was the Lord himself who redirected their course. And what do I do? What route do I take to encounter the living Christ? He will always be close to us to correct our course if we have strayed.

“Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Lk 24:5). This question enables us to overcome the temptation to look back, to what was yesterday, and it spurs us on to the future. Jesus is not in the sepulchre, he is Risen! He is the Living One, the One who always renews his body, which is the Church, and enables it to walk by drawing it towards Him. “Yesterday” is the tomb of Jesus and the tomb of the Church, the tomb of truth and justice; “today” is the perennial Resurrection to which the Holy Spirit impels us, bestowing on us full freedom.

Today this question is also addressed to us. You, why do you seek the living among the dead, you who withdraw into yourself after a failure, and you who no longer have the strength to pray? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who feel alone, abandoned by friends and perhaps also by God? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who have lost hope and you who feel imprisoned by your sins? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who aspire to beauty, to spiritual perfection, to justice and to peace?

We need to hear ourselves repeat and to remind one other of the angels’ admonition! This admonition: “Why do you seek the living among the dead” helps us leave behind our empty sadness and opens us to the horizons of joy and hope. That hope which rolls back the stones from tombs and encourages one to proclaim the Good News, capable of generating new life for others. Let us repeat the Angels’ phrase in order to keep it in our hearts and in our memory, and then let everyone respond in silence: “Why do you seek the living among the dead”. Let’s repeat it! [He repeats it with the crowd]. Behold, brothers and sisters, He is alive, He is with us! Do not go to the many tombs that today promise you something, beauty, and then give you nothing! He is alive! Let us not not seek the living among the dead! Thank you.

Greetings:

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's Audience, including those from Scotland, Sweden, Finland and the United States. I offer a special greeting to the newly-ordained deacons from the Pontifical Irish College, as well as their families and friends. Upon all of you, and upon your families, I invoke the joy and peace of the Risen Lord. God bless you all!

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Yesterday I received a video appeal from the workers of the Lucchini di Piombino, sent to me before the closure of the blast furnace, which truly moved me. It left me feeling sad. Dear workers, dear brothers, a deep sadness was depicted on your faces, and the worry of fathers of families who are only asking for their right to work in order to live with dignity and to be able to protect, feed and educate their own children. Be assured of my closeness and my prayer; do not be discouraged, the Pope is at your side and is praying for you, so that when human hope is extinguished, may divine hope which never disappoints always remain alive. Dear workers, dear brothers, I embrace you fraternally; and I ask all the managers to make every creative and generous effort to rekindle hope in the hearts of our brothers and in the hearts of all those who are unemployed due to waste and the economic crisis. Please, open your eyes and do not fold your arms!

Over the last weeks many messages expressing good wishes for a holy Easter have arrived from all over the world. I wish to reciprocate these best wishes to everyone. From my heart I wish to thank the children, young people, elderly, families, parish and religious communities, associations, movements and various groups that have wished to show me their affection and closeness. I ask everyone to continue to pray for me and for my service to the Church.

Next Sunday at Alba in the Piedmont, Giuseppe Giroto, a priest of the Order of Friars Preachers who was killed *in odium fidei* in the Nazi concentration camp of Dachau, will be proclaimed Blessed. May his heroic Christian witness and his martyrdom arouse in many the desire to adhere ever more closely to Jesus and to the Gospel.

I extend a special thought to *young people*, *the sick* and *newlyweds*. May the Easter proclamation continue to make your hearts burn within you, as happened to the disciples of Emmaus: dear *young people*, may you always live the faith with enthusiasm, convinced that only the Lord Jesus allows us to attain full and lasting happiness; dear *sick*, there is no greater comfort and more beautiful consolation in your suffering than knowing that Christ is Risen: and may you, dear *newlyweds*, live your marriage in true adherence to Christ and to the Gospel teachings.

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