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Meditations: Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter

Some reflections that can guide our prayer during this season of Easter.

- Christ is the Light of the world
- The apostles' witness of faith
- We don't do apostolate, we are apostles

THE LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to

the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God (Jn 3:19-21). The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus continues in today's Gospel passage. It is a recurrent theme in John's Gospel: Christ is the Light of the world and whoever follows Him *will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (Jn 8:12).* The light that Christ brought into the world wasn't overpowering. Welcoming it or not, drawing close to it or turning away, was up to the free choice of each person's heart. The reality is that many rejected it, and others even tried to extinguish it. But the divine plan of salvation surpasses any human schemes.

The light of the Risen Christ continues to be a light of love. It doesn't impose itself on us but rather

shines in a humble and discreet way, waiting for our free response. It doesn't try to subjugate us, or to override our possibility of choosing freely. But despite its seeming weakness, when we welcome this light it proves capable of dispelling even the densest darkness. "Christ, risen from the dead, shines in this world and he does so most brightly in those places where, in human terms, everything seems obscure and hopeless. He has conquered death – he is alive – and faith in him is like a small light that cuts through everything dark and threatening. To be sure, those who believe in Jesus do not lead lives of perpetual sunshine, spared from suffering and hardship. But there is always a clear light that illumines the way, the path leading to the fullness of life (cf. *Jn* 10:10). The eyes of those who believe in Christ see light even amid the darkest night and they already see the dawning of a new day."^[1] —

OUR LORD, who revealed himself as the Light of the world, also told his disciples: *You are the light of the world* (Mt 5:14). We are all called to be light and, together with other Christians, to build up a radiance that increases all the time: "The light does not remain alone. All around, other lights are being enkindled. And in their glow, we can find our bearings. We do not live alone in this world. And we have to rely on other people, especially for the most important things in life. Particularly in our faith we do not stand alone, but are links in the great chain of believers. No one can come to believe without being supported by the faith of others, and conversely, through my faith I help to strengthen others in their faith. We help one another to be an example for each other and share with others what is ours: our thoughts, our deeds, our affections. And we help one another

to find our bearings, our place in the world.”^[2] —

This was true of the first Christians, who were *of one heart and soul* (Acts 4:32). “The reborn community has the grace of unity, of harmony. And the only thing that can give us this harmony is the Holy Spirit, who is the harmony between the Father and the Son. He is the Gift that brings about harmony.”^[3] — The Paraclete united the first Christians and spurred them to evangelise; and, as Holy Scripture recounts, the Church grew rapidly. It is true that, together with the light of the faith, neither darkness nor difficulties were lacking. In today’s Mass, we read how the authorities, on seeing so many people embracing Christianity, *arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison* (Acts 5:18). In one way or another, difficulties will always be present in our lives too when we strive to spread Christ’s

light in our environment. When we are tempted to think that the fruit of our labour is scant and that our personal qualities are not up to the task, we can pray with the Psalmist: *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him (Ps 34:6)*. This would also have been the attitude of the apostles while locked up in prison. And God's consolation was not long in coming.

BUT AT NIGHT an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, 'Go and stand in the Temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.' And when they heard this, they entered the Temple at daybreak and taught (Acts 5:19-21).

Although the apparition of the angel is not described in detail, it must have deeply impressed them. At the first light of day, and knowing that they would again be arrested, the apostles carried out that indication. They did so, not as someone who fulfils a task external to them, but as

someone who carries out a mission that is their own, that has become part of their own being and life. They not only “did” apostolate: they were apostles and had the inner conviction of being apostles, witnesses to a happening that had transformed their own lives.

We too “have to fill the world with light,” Saint Josemaría wrote. “Nothing can produce greater satisfaction than leading so many souls to the light and warmth of Christ. People whom no one has taught to value their ordinary life, for whom what is ordinary seems empty and meaningless, who fail to understand and be amazed at this great truth: Christ is concerned about all of us, even the smallest and seemingly most insignificant. We have to tell everyone: Christ is seeking you too, just as he sought out the first twelve, as he sought out the Samaritan woman, as he sought out

Zacchaeus. And just as he told the paralytic: *surge et ambula* (Mk 2:9), get up, the Lord is waiting for you; and just as he told the widow of Nain's son: *tibi dico, surge!* (Lk 7:14), I say to you, get up; shake off your love of comfort, your indolence, rise up from the dead.”^[4] —

Let us ask our Mother in heaven to strengthen our awareness that we are apostles, so that we may always respond promptly to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and help many souls come closer to God.

^[1] — Benedict XVI, Speech, 24 September 2011

^[2] — Ibid.

^[3] — Francis, Homily, 14 April 2015.

^[4] — Saint Josemaría, *Letter 24-III-1930*.

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