

“We are absorbed by many activities”

In his 17 December general audience, Pope Leo XIV continued his catechetical cycle on Jesus Christ, our hope, speaking about Easter as the refuge of the restless heart.

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Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

Human life is characterized by a constant movement that drives us to do, to act. Nowadays speed is

required everywhere in order to achieve optimal results in a wide variety of fields. How does Jesus' resurrection shed light on this aspect of our experience? When we participate in his victory over death, will we rest? Faith tells us: yes, we will rest. We will not be inactive, but we will enter into God's repose, which is peace and joy. So, should we just wait, or can this change us right now?

We are absorbed by many activities that do not always leave us satisfied. A lot of our actions have to do with practical, concrete things. We have to assume responsibility for many commitments, solve problems, face difficulties. Jesus too was involved with people and with life, not sparing himself, but rather giving himself to the end. Yet we often perceive how too much *doing*, instead of giving us fulfilment, becomes a vortex that overwhelms us, takes away our

serenity, and prevents us from living to the fullest what is truly important in our lives. We then feel tired and dissatisfied: time seems to be wasted on a thousand practical things that do not, however, resolve the ultimate meaning of our existence.

Sometimes, at the end of days full of activities, we feel empty. Why? Because we are not machines, we have a “heart;” indeed, we can say that we *are* a heart.

The heart is the symbol of all our humanity, the sum of our thoughts, feelings and desires, the invisible centre of our selves. The Evangelist Matthew invites us to reflect on the importance of the heart, quoting this beautiful phrase of Jesus: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (*Mt 6:21*).

It is therefore in the heart that true treasure is kept, not in earthly safes, not in large financial investments,

which today more than ever before are out of control and unjustly concentrated at the bloody price of millions of human lives and the devastation of God's creation.

It is important to reflect on these aspects, because in the numerous commitments we continually face, there is an increasing risk of dispersion, sometimes of despair, of meaninglessness, even in apparently successful people. Instead, interpreting life in the light of Easter, looking at it with the Risen Jesus, means finding access to the essence of the human person, to our heart: *cor inquietum*. With this adjective “restless,” Saint Augustine helps us understand the human being’s yearning for fulfilment. The full sentence refers to the beginning of the *Confessions*, where Augustine writes: “Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you” (I, 1,1).

Restlessness is the sign that our heart does not move by chance, in a disordered way, without a purpose or a destination, but is oriented towards its ultimate destination, the “return home.” The authentic approach of the heart does not consist in possessing the goods of this world, but in achieving what can fill it completely; namely, the love of God, or rather, God who is Love. This treasure, however, can only be found by loving the neighbour we meet along the way: brothers and sisters in flesh and blood, whose presence stirs and questions our heart, calling it to open up and give itself. Our neighbour asks us to slow down, to look them in the eye, sometimes to change our plans, perhaps even to change direction.

Dear friends, here is the secret of the movement of the human heart: returning to the source of its being, delighting in the joy that never fails,

that never disappoints. No one can live without a meaning that goes beyond the contingent, beyond what passes away. The human heart cannot live without hope, without knowing that it is made for fullness, not for want.

Jesus Christ, with his Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection, has given us a solid foundation for this hope. The restless heart will not be disappointed, if it enters into the dynamism of the love for which it was created. The destination is certain, life has triumphed, and in Christ it will continue to triumph in every death of daily life. This is Christian hope: let us always bless and thank the Lord who has given it to us!

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