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“Christ is the destination of our journey”

In his 15 October general audience, Pope Leo XIV continued his catechetical cycle on Jesus Christ, our hope, speaking about the Risen Christ as a sign of hope for the contemporary world.

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Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In the Jubilee Year catecheses, until now, we have retraced the life of Jesus, following the Gospels, from his birth to his death and resurrection. In so doing, our pilgrimage of hope has found its solid foundation, its sure way. Now, in the last part of the journey, we will allow the mystery of Christ, which culminates in the Resurrection, to radiate its light of salvation in contact with the current human and historical reality, with its questions and challenges.

Our lives are marked by countless events, full of different nuances and experiences. At times we feel joyful, other times sad, other times fulfilled or stressed, gratified or demotivated. We live busy lives, we concentrate on achieving results, and we even attain lofty, prestigious goals. Conversely, we remain suspended, precarious, awaiting success and recognition that are delayed or do not arrive at all. In short, we find ourselves

experiencing a paradoxical situation: we would like to be happy, and yet it is very difficult to be happy in a continuous way, without any shadows. We come to terms with our limitations and, at the same time, with the irrepressible urge to try to overcome them. We feel deep down that we are always missing something.

In truth, we were not created for *lack*, but for *fullness*, to rejoice in life, and life in abundance, according to Jesus' expression in the Gospel of John (cf. 10:10).

This deep desire in our hearts can find its ultimate answer not in roles, not in power, not in having, but in the certainty that there is someone who guarantees this constitutive impulse of our humanity; in the awareness that this expectation will not be disappointed or thwarted. This certainty coincides with hope.

This does not mean thinking in an optimistic way: often optimism lets us down, causing our expectations to implode, whereas hope promises and fulfils.

Sisters and brothers, the Risen Jesus is the guarantee of this deliverance! He is the wellspring that satisfies our thirst, the infinite thirst for fullness that the Holy Spirit imbues into our hearts. Indeed, the Resurrection of Christ is not a simple event of human history, but the event that transformed it from within.

Let us think about a source of water. What are its characteristics? It quenches thirst and refreshes creatures, irrigates the land, renders fertile and living what would otherwise remain barren. It gives refreshment to the weary traveller, offering him the joy of an oasis of freshness. A wellspring appears as a freely-given gift for nature, for

creatures, for human beings.
Without water it is not possible to live.

The Risen One is the living wellspring that does not dry up and does not change. It always stays pure and ready for anyone who is thirsty. And the more we taste the mystery of God, the more we are attracted to it, without ever becoming completely satiated. Saint Augustine, in the tenth Book of the *Confessions*, captures exactly this inexhaustible longing of our hearts and expresses it in his famous *Hymn to Beauty*: “You exhaled odours, and I drew in my breath and do pant after you. I tasted, and do hunger and thirst. You touched me, and I burned for your peace” (X, 27, 38).

Jesus, with his Resurrection, has guaranteed for us a permanent source of life: he is the living one (cf. *Rev* 1:18), the lover of life, the victor

over all death. Therefore, he is able to offer us refreshment in our earthly journey and assure us of perfect peace in eternity. Only Jesus, who died and rose again, responds to the deepest questions of our heart: is there really a destination for us? Does our existence have any meaning? And the suffering of so many innocents, how can it be redeemed?

The Risen Jesus does not bestow upon us an answer “from above,” but becomes our companion on this often arduous, painful and mysterious journey. Only He can fill our empty flask when our thirst becomes unbearable.

And he is also the destination of our journey. Without his love, the voyage of life would become wandering without a goal, a tragic mistake with a missed destination. We are fragile creatures. Mistakes are part of our

humanity; it is the wound of sin that makes us fall, give up, despair. To rise again instead means to get up and stand on our feet. The Risen One guarantees our arrival, leading us home, where we are awaited, loved, saved. To journey with him means to experience being sustained despite everything, to have our thirst quenched and to be refreshed in the hardships and struggles that, like heavy stones, threaten to block or divert our history.

Dear friends, from Christ's Resurrection springs the hope that gives us a foretaste, despite the fatigue of living, of a deep and joyful calm: that peace the only he can give us in the end, without end.

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