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“Paschal hope does not disappoint”

In his 5 November general audience, Pope Leo XIV continued his catechetical cycle on Jesus Christ, our hope, speaking about Easter, which gives hope to everyday life.

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Dear brothers and sisters, good morning, and welcome to you all!

The Pasch of Jesus is an event that does not belong to a distant past, now settled into tradition like so many

other episodes in human history. The Church teaches us to make a living remembrance of the Resurrection every year on Easter Sunday and every day in the Eucharistic celebration, during which the promise of the risen Lord is most fully realized: “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (*Mt* 28:20).

For this reason, the Paschal Mystery is the cornerstone of Christian life, around which all other events revolve. We can say, then, without any irenicism or sentimentality, that every day is Easter. In what way?

Hour by hour, we have so many different experiences: pain, suffering, sadness, intertwined with joy, wonder, serenity. But through every situation, the human heart longs for fullness, a profound happiness. A great twentieth-century philosopher, Saint Teresa Benedicta

of the Cross, born Edith Stein, who delved deeply into the mystery of the human person, reminds us of this dynamism of the constant search for fulfilment. “The human being,” she writes, “always longs to have being given to him anew, so that he can draw on what the moment gives him and at the same time takes away from him” (*Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt to Ascend to the Meaning of Being*, Rome 1998, pg. 387). We are immersed in limitation, but we also strive to surpass it.

The Paschal proclamation is the most beautiful, joyful and overwhelming news that has ever resounded in all of history. It is the quintessential “Gospel,” which attests to the victory of love over sin and of life over death, and this is why it is the only thing capable of satisfying the demand for meaning that troubles our minds and our hearts. Human beings are inspired by an inner

movement, striving towards a beyond that continually attracts them. No contingent reality satisfies us. We tend towards the infinite and the eternal. This contrasts with the experience of death, anticipated by suffering, loss, and failure. As Saint Francis sings, “*nullu homo vivente po skampare*” (“no living man can escape”) from death (cf. *Canticle of the Sun*).

Everything changes thanks to that morning when the women had gone to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord, and found it empty. The question posed by the Magi who came from the East to Jerusalem: “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” (*Mt 2:1-2*), finds its definitive answer in the words of the mysterious youth dressed in white, who speaks to the women at Easter dawn: “You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here” (*Mk 16:6*).

From that morning until today, every day, Jesus will also have this title: the Living One, as He presents himself in *Revelation*: “I am the First and the Last, and the Living One: I died, and behold I am alive for evermore” (*Rev* 1:17-18). And in Him, we have the assurance of always being able to find the lodestar towards which we can direct our seemingly chaotic lives, marked by events that often appear confusing, unacceptable, incomprehensible: evil in its many forms, suffering, death, events that affect each and every one of us. Meditating on the mystery of the Resurrection, we find an answer to our thirst for meaning.

Faced with our fragile humanity, the Paschal proclamation becomes care and healing, nourishing hope in the face of the frightening challenges that life presents us with every day on a personal and global level. In the perspective of Easter, the *Via Crucis*,

the Way of the Cross, is transfigured into the *Via Lucis*, the Way of Light. We need to savour and meditate on the joy after the pain, to retrace in the new light all the stages that preceded the Resurrection.

Easter does not eliminate the cross, but defeats it in the miraculous duel that changed our human history. Even our time, marked by so many crosses, invokes the dawn of Paschal hope. Christ's Resurrection is not an idea, a theory, but the Event that is the foundation of faith. He, the Risen One, through the Holy Spirit, continues to remind us of this, so that we can be His witnesses even where human history does not see light on the horizon. Paschal hope does not disappoint. To believe truly in the Pasch through our daily journey means revolutionizing our lives, being transformed in order to transform the world with the gentle

and courageous power of Christian hope.

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