
JESUS IS FULL OF LIFE! (1)



Since the beginning of Lent, with our friends Danny and Carrie we have learned about the marvel and wonder of life all around us, in nature and in people. We have discovered or rediscovered God as the Source of Life. In the next step we are taking, it is Jesus who will be our guide. Through some of the Gospel stories, we shall watch him act, and we shall listen to his words. We shall try to understand a bit better the Good News he has brought us: "God our Father loves us, and He wants us to be alive!" This will be our way of being together in unity, during Lent, with all the children, their parents and their religious educators in family- and parish-based religious education.

FEELING LIKE DANCING!

We are invited to watch Jesus and to discover the Good News he has brought us. By following Jesus along the roads of Palestine, by watching his gestures and listening to his words, we shall discover or rediscover that these words and gestures are bearers of life, love, and a desire to offer life. And like Jesus, we may become better or more attentive in supporting life around us. To better understand that Jesus is the bearer of Good News, it is important to recall our own reactions when we ourselves have brought good news to others. Good news bring joy to others and makes them happy, it makes one want to sing and dance. Good news bring life to the heart, and we want to share it with others.

FEELING LIKE CELEBRATING!

I recall getting a FAX from a nephew who had just become the father of a beautiful baby daughter: "It is the greatest news of my life that I share with you: the birth of our daughter Arianne, a healthy baby!" I also remember a phone call from one of my brothers, following surgery: "There is no trace of cancer! Everything was taken out!" And I remember a card received from a friend: "My wife and I have both found well-paying jobs. The family will be better off." And how exciting it is to get news like: "Claudine and I are getting married next year, we love each other and we have taken the means for this love to continue growing!" Mass media, too, can be bearers of good news: new highway constructions, job creation, the election of deserving candidates, the progress of peace, gestures of forgiveness, of caring and sharing, etc. We are so used to only getting news of war or violence, that we are developing a culture of death. It is important to rediscover good news such as friendly visits, new births, healings, good school marks, great sport scores, home celebrations, etc. If for one sad bit of news we only had two pieces of good news to tell, how different our world would be! It would be such a happy thing to give thanks to God the Source of Life, for all the events which have been good news to us. It would be so important to take time to list some of them. Jesus is our Friend, he wants to tell us about the Good news he bears in his heart. This Good news he has for us, is that God loves us.

FEELING LIKE LOVING!

Throughout his life Jesus will say words and perform acts to help us understand the Good news. The first words he spoke in public in Nazareth were: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord..." And he added: "Today this Scripture

passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:18-19, 21) This “today” is also 2003... From the very moment of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive a son to be named Jesus: the child is holy and is called “Son of God.” At his birth in Bethlehem the angels sing: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth!” The wise men marvelled at what they had seen and heard; they were filled with joy at the sight of the star which pointed to the child’s birth place. The same joy was felt by the prophet Simeon and the prophetess Anna: their eyes witnessed God’s saving deed displayed for all the peoples to see: a revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of His people Israel!”

FEELING LIKE LISTENING!

After all these glorious times punctuated by the flight into Egypt and the return to Nazareth, close to thirty years go by. Jesus grew “in wisdom and age and grace.” A God who became human and who lived an ordinary human life, in silent work, in humility and prayer, such a humble life that his neighbours said: “Is he not the son of Joseph?” Then there happened the great event when Jesus comes from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptised by John in the Jordan. As he comes out of the water, “the skies opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in visible form like a dove. And a voice from heaven was heard to say: ‘You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests’.” (Lk 3:21-22) Matthew’s Gospel tells us that after having fasted forty days in the desert and chosen his first disciples, Jesus spoke the beautiful words of the Beatitudes, a proclamation of happiness for everyone from every nation. “Happy are the poor in spirit, happy are the meek, happy are the afflicted, happy are those who hunger and thirst for justice, happy the merciful, happy the pure in heart, happy the peacemakers, happy the persecuted for justice’s sake.” (Mt. 5:3-12)

FEELING LIKE WELCOMING!

At our baptism, the Father reminded us: “You are my beloved child, and I have put all my love in you!” And as He welcomed the children, He continues to welcome us, too. “Let the little children come to me, do not prevent them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of my Father belongs.” (Mt. 19:14) It is good to remember the Good news brought by these life-giving words of comfort.

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