
JESUS IS FULL OF LIFE! (2)



I am in good company with the children and parents involved in the family- and parish-based religious education programme, as I reflect a little more deeply on certain Gospel passages where Jesus reveals himself to us through his words and deeds which are really Good News. May Lent this year be for us an unforgettable experience for our being in contact with God the Source of Life and His beloved Son, the Living One who gives up his life for us!

WHEN JESUS DECIDES TO PAY SOMEONE A VISIT

Jesus comes to the town of Jericho and many people turn out to see him. Zacchaeus, too, would like to see Jesus, but he is too short. He runs and climbs a sycamore tree which was along Jesus' route. Jesus looked up and said: "Zacchaeus, hurry down, I mean to stay at your house today!" Zacchaeus quickly descended, and welcomed him with delight. When this was observed, everyone began to murmur, 'He has gone to a sinner's house as a guest.' But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord: 'I will give half my belongings, Lord, to the poor. If I have defrauded everyone in the least, I pay him back fourfold.' (Lk. 19:1-8). And since that day Zacchaeus remained the friend of Jesus. Even today, Jesus continues his visits, he comes to live with us. What welcome do we give him? What does it change in us? As much as in Zacchaeus? Jesus wants to visit our hearts. Let us close our eyes, let us listen to his words: "I mean to stay at your house today!" Jesus always welcomes us the way he welcomed Zacchaeus. As he helped Zacchaeus change heart, so does he want to change ours.

JESUS AIDS THE SICK

We have learned that Jesus was kind to children and sinners like Zacchaeus. He touched them, he spoke words to make them happy. Jesus also touches the sick, he wants them to regain their health. One day Jesus and his friends arrive at the small town of Bethsaida, and the townspeople bring him a blind man. They say to Jesus, "One of our friends is blind, but if you touch him he will see again." Jesus takes the blind man's hand and leads him away from the others. He puts a bit of saliva on the blind man's eyes, lays his hands on him, and asks: "Do you see something?" The man opens his eyes: "I see people... they look like walking trees." Then a second time Jesus laid his hands on his eyes, and he saw perfectly: his sight was restored and he could see everything clearly. He was healed (Mk. 8:22-25). The miracle is a sign of God's presence. God is there, and He does things to His people. God works wonders. Miracles, signs, marvels, as many words to describe God's loving work for His people. The miracle still remains the sign of God's will. The story of the blind man in Bethsaida is a sign that Jesus gives to show people that God, Source of life, wants all of us to be alive! The signs naturally lead to acknowledge Jesus as God's Messenger, as the Bearer of the Good News of the Kingdom. Just as Jesus welcomed the children, the sinners and those who were not accepted by society, so does he watch over those who are "blind in their hearts," those who cannot see others around them, those who do not always know what to do.

JESUS IS IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH HIS FATHER

Jesus often speaks to his Father and his friends. One day, Philip, one of Jesus' friends, asked him, "Jesus, show us the Father and we shall be satisfied." Jesus answered: "Philip, I have been with you all this time, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:8). Jesus wants everyone to know his Father. He wants to introduce us to the love which the Father offers to all. What Jesus says and does, it is his Father working through him. God our Father is the Source of Life. He brings out life in others through Jesus. He brings joy and peace to those who know Him. Jesus often talks to his Father, and his friends see him pray. One day his friends asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray." So Jesus taught them this beautiful prayer of the children of God: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

JESUS' LAST MEAL

At the last meal Jesus had with his friends, he said: "I have made known to you everything which the Father has taught me, because you are my friends. The Father loves you, and has sent me to reveal this to you. Now, I am about to die." Jesus' friends are sad. Jesus tells them: "Do not be sad, I shall not leave you alone." Then Jesus took some bread, prayed over it, and shared it with his friends, saying, "Take this bread and eat it, it is my body given for you." Then he took some wine, gave thanks to his Father, passed it to his disciples and said: "This is my blood poured out for you." Then he added: "Do this in memory of me." After the meal, Jesus had a long conversation with his friends. He told them that what was the most important for him and them was to love one another.

OUR TIME NOW TO SHARE THE LIFE WE HAVE RECEIVED

It is good for us to think about everything Jesus said. Like the Virgin Mary, his Mother who kept all these memories in her heart and pondered them, we are asked to ponder often Jesus' acts of goodness and kindness, to think about his words telling us over and over again how his Father loves us. Now it is our turn to proclaim what Jesus himself proclaimed, to tell others how he loves us. He loves us as much as He loved Zacchaeus and the blind man He cured, and all the children that Jesus welcomed and blessed. He wants us in turn to be full of love and kindness to those around us. "Let us love one another!" It is by the love we show to one another that others will see that we are friends of Jesus.

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