



### **From A Bishop's Journal (641)**

### **Holy Days throughout the Year!**

**L**ent is over. The commitment I had made to deepen with you Level Four of the family- and parish-based catechetics programme will shortly come to an end, after having presented you the recommendations of the Pastoral Orientation Congress for a New Evangelisation. I want to thank all those involved in the catechetics programme: first of all, the young people themselves who welcome the Word of God, and their parents who take pleasure in speaking of Jesus with their children, then the catechists with their strong devotion in serving the Word, and the priests who unceasingly seed the Word of God in the midst of the Church. May all this sowing be both promise and reality: the Kingdom of God is at stake, like the seeds in the ground producing their fruit in due season.

### **Mysteries for the Holy Days**

In order to better understand the catechetical reflection of Level Four, I simply invite you to consider in your heart the mysteries that the late Pope John Paul II gave us, for the recitation of the rosary. I believe that meditation on these mysteries reminds us over and over again of the constant presence of the Emmanuel in our own lives. Through the joyous, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, we can hear Jesus say to us: "I am with you!" It is like a summary of our catechetical level, a summary of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, a very simple summary of "God's wonderful deeds" which the Holy Spirit constantly reminds us of. These mysteries recapitulate for us the major moments of Jesus' life, how he was impatiently awaited by the people of Palestine, and who has been with the Christian people for over two thousand years and who abides with us even today, to help us find solutions to situations "that make no sense". We thank him for all he brings us.

### **Joyful Mysteries**

It is a comfort to us to remember the angel's visit to Mary: "Do not fear, Mary. You have found favour with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will be without end." Deeply troubled, Mary wondered how this could be, and the angel told her, "Nothing is impossible with God. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence, the holy offspring to be born will be called Son of God." Mary said: "I am the servant of the

Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.” Such a humble beginning! Such an announcement! Such availability! It is in this dialogue that we discover the origin of Jesus the Messiah, the one who had been promised for centuries. Then there was Mary’s visit to her cousin Elizabeth who asked her: “Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Blest is she who trusted that the Lord’s words to her would be fulfilled.” Then Mary broke out in her *Magnificat*: “The Lord has done great things for me.” His love is really from age to age! How can we not remember the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, and the visits of the shepherds and the Magi? “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us!” How can we keep from singing with the angels: “Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favour rests.” And then we recall Jesus’ presentation in the Temple, and how he was found, later, in that same Temple. We also remember the words of faith of the old man Simeon: “My eyes have witnessed your saving deed displayed for all the peoples to see. A revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of your people Israel.”

### **Luminous Mysteries**

Pope John Paul II invited us to meditate on various events in Jesus’ public life: his baptism in the Jordan River, his first miracle at Cana, his preaching, his transfiguration on Mount Thabor, and the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday. Jesus is truly God’s beloved Son. At the River Jordan as on Mount Thabor, the Father declared: “This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” How can we not marvel at the first “sign” of Jesus at Cana? Jesus transforms all things and begins celebrations in the midst of humankind: he changes human love into divine love. The words he spoke in those years tell us of the Father’s love for all humankind, and they introduce us to the way of the Beatitudes. Through parables Jesus tried to make us understand the presence and development of the Kingdom of heaven. He taught us to pray to God our Father, that His Kingdom come. At the Last supper, he instituted the Holy Eucharist, so that he would always be with us. His Body offered up and his Blood poured out reminds all generations of the extent of that love. “There is no greater love than to give up one’s life.”

### **Sorrowful Mysteries**

Throughout Holy Week we had the opportunity to meditate on Jesus’ passion: his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, where his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground, as Saint Luke records it. His arrest, the kiss of betrayal, Peter’s denial, Jesus’ loneliness – only John and Jesus’ mother Mary follow him to the place of crucifixion – the two mock trials, the whipping, carrying the cross, the crucifixion, and his ignominious death amid the mocking of the crowd. May these writings arouse in us the Roman centurion’s act of faith, as he stood before the cross: “Truly, this was the Son of God.” May all the celebrations at Easter time lead us more and more into the great mystery of our faith.

### **Glorious Mysteries**

For fifty days – from Easter to Pentecost – the Church invites us to meditate on and celebrate the great paschal mystery. The Evangelists narrate some of the events surrounding the Risen Jesus: the evening of Easter, the road to Emmaus, the meeting on the seashore. However, it was to Mary Magdalen that Jesus first appeared, and she immediately ran to announce it to those who had been with him and who were mourning his death. Then we are invited to recall Jesus’ Ascension, the sending off of the Apostles “to all the nations,” the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the whole world. And as Mary the Mother of Jesus was there in the Upper Room with the Apostles,

we also recall her assumption and glorification in heaven. May our meditation of all these mysteries always remind us of the constant presence of the Risen Jesus in our lives. You are there, and very much alive!

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