

*Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen*

*“If X<sup>t</sup> is not risen from the dead, our preaching is in vein, and your faith also is meaningless”, says St. Paul. Today we celebrate the risen Christ, center of faith of every Christian. Easter Wishes!*

Year 2000, St. JP II invited Bp. Van Thuan from Vietnam, for preaching the annual retreat to members of Roman Curia. For long 13 yrs, Bp Thuan was in isolation imprisonment, for the reason that he believed and practiced Cath. Faith under the com. Govt. While at breakfast, JP asked, “What is the theme of your preaching to us today”? He answered: for the last 13 yrs, while in prison, in the late nights, with few drops of wine on my left palm mixed with 1 drop of water, and with few particles of bread on my right palm, I celebrated secretly the Holy Mass. The only thing I prayed during those days to Jesus was to *give me the grace to keep my faith alive*. Jesus in fact spoke to me **about hope**, and it is this hope that made me come out of prison and now stand before your holiness today. I am going to speak to you about this hope, the crucified Christ taught me there.

**The cross** was scandal to the Hebrews and foolishness to the gentiles. The one, who died on this cross, is becoming eloquent to us today about hope. Yes friends, **Easter is the feast of hope.**

One of the gtst prayers of ancient India sages is “*Mruthyo ma amrutham gamaya*’= *lead me from death to life*. Easter is God’s answer to this prayer.

The most disturbing questions for humanity always was: *Is there life after death?* But from today, that question is irrelevant. Bcs, he who taught us, “*I am the Resurrection and life*”, has shown us what he meant and who he really is. The resurrection after life has come true for you and me, through the glorious resurrection of Christ from the most miserable death he embraced.

There were many who taught, and continue to teach that there is nothing beyond this life: therefore you can lead a life, centered in this passing world alone. Starting from the Epicureans, it continues till today. But the Lord’s resur, and the hope that brings with it, inspires and strengthens us to think and live differently from all these ideologies. Its not merely a physical hope, but a hope that reaches out to eternity, beyond here and now.

The first wish the risen Lord gives to his disciples is: **don’t be afraid, peace be with you**! Anyone who has met the risen Xt in life, and believes in him, *need not be afraid*. Bcs, to strengthen you in your pathways, to be a lamp for your steps and light for your ways, he has risen from the dead.

**Appearing to Magdalene**, Jesus asks the one question: “*Woman, why do you cry?*” Friends, are you crying for something or someone dear whom you lost?, Rejected or betrayed? -for your lost job? Your broken relationship? You have failed in life?

The Lord is asking you today the same question: **why are you crying**, like someone without hope? Don’t you know that I am

here who, have beaten the greatest enemy- death and therefore able to help you in your trials, pains, sufferings?

We all have the good Fridays of our struggles in life, but if you put trust in he who says, “do not be afraid”, you will truly find the peace and joy of Easter.

Easter tells us beyond doubt that there is a shore beyond the sea of suffering, there will come the sunshine after the darkness of nights, and there is eternal life after death. This would strengthen us amidst any kind of trials, without ever giving up, facing and overcoming with courage and hope, whatever comes on your way.

In 2003, during the day time earthquake in India, among the many destroyed buildings, was a school also. A man ran with loud cries, towards the location where the school in which his child was studying. He rushed to the location and started moving the debris with a spade. Only after 22 hrs, he heard a sound “dad”; he recognized that it was his child’s voice. In a little triangle corner, formed miraculously under the ruins, 3 boys including his child were safe. Everyone asked the boy, how he managed to survive there all these hours, he replied: *“I told my friends that if my dad is alive, he will surely come to save me. We were waiting for my dad to come!”*

Our lives too may be hidden under the debris, the dark corners of life problems! Friends, be assured and hopeful, our Lord is alive and he is coming to bring life and light into your lives, if you wait for him, with open heart. Our Lord is risen, Alleuia! Amen!