



Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We proclaim the victory of Love over death, and over all the forms of death that still reign over the world. This is an apostolic imperative. Beyond the usual and necessary words that exalt the salvation of the world in the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, there is an essential dimension that I would like to share with you: there is no resurrection without the mystery of the Cross.

Surely you know the cross of San Damiano. It is a 12th century icon. It is by means of this cross that God spoke these words to Saint Francis of Assisi: “Go and repair my house which, as you can see, is falling into ruin!” It suffices to contemplate this cross for a few moments to discover that it combines the Passion and the Resurrection into one and the same event. We cannot enter into the mystery of the Resurrection without our living the mystery of the Cross. Christ appears there both crucified and already risen. This icon expresses one and the same reality: the Passion of Christ is inseparable from his Descent into hell, his Resurrection, and his Ascension.

Saint Tugdual wrote: “What constitutes the mediocrity of Christians today is precisely the fact that they do not know, or no longer know, how to suffer the Cross. All this evil stems from the fact that we no longer know how to renounce ourselves.” In a world without faith where the only perspective is the possession of material goods and personal success, according to the criteria of our society, it is very difficult for Christians to understand the meaning of Christ’s Cross.

In the book entitled *Lettres de Pierre*, we read this passage: “For those who know how to contemplate the Cross in the fulness of its light, it is no longer hope, it is the sight of Love, the conqueror of death; it is no longer hope, but it is present now. Christ has therefore conquered death and demonstrated the power of Love, the only source of the life that cannot end.” (Volume II)

The Cross is none other than the essence of Divine Love acting in the heart of the man who accepts to live according to Christ's teachings and life. For how can we proclaim the Resurrection of Christ if we have not entered through the Gospel's narrow gate? (cf: Mt 7:13-14) This gate is the Cross of Christ without which we cannot unite ourselves with Him. The Cross is the Tree of Life that was lost and restored to the world. The Cross is the tree of the Resurrection and, as was said above, the Cross is Love, the conqueror of death.

By his Resurrection, the Lord Jesus is the very Life of this tree. Thus the crosses of our existence, which are all the manifestations of our spiritual poverty, manifest the fruits of his Resurrection in us when united to the Cross of Christ. Every day, at every moment, we can proclaim the Resurrection of Christ by our Christian life. The world is at war, the world is suffering from a thousand ills, and the world does not yet know the good news of the Gospel. Begotten by our Lord Jesus, the Church has no other essence and goal than Divine Love, revealed and put into action by all the baptized. This is why Jesus said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mt 16:24).

By our lives we will proclaim to the world and to all creation that Christ is truly Risen!

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Paschal season that opens before us is the time that stretches out before our entire life. The Light of the Resurrection is everywhere, in everything, and for everyone.



St. Damien's Cross

"You are the light of the world," says the Lord. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:14,16). May the Peace and the Joy of Easter fill your hearts and radiate in your life!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

+MARC, PRIMATE
of the Celtic Orthodox Church