THE EMPTY TOMB AND HEARTS LIKE GRAVES

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Beloved in Christ the Lord, we gather on this Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection in order to go in spirit to the tomb of Christ. When we visit the graves of our departed loved ones, we go there full of sorrow, remembering those who have passed away. More than once, no doubt, a tear comes to our eye. The grave is a place of reflection. The grave is a place that stirs up memories, longing.

Today we go to the Holy City of Jerusalem. We go to see the empty tomb in which our Lord Jesus Christ was laid. The tomb that on Friday was sealed with a heavy stone; the tomb that, for the nearest and dearest of the Lord Jesus, for the Most Holy Mother, for the Apostles, exactly like the graves of our own loved ones, was a place that stirred up sorrow. The thought of Christ's tomb drew more than one tear during that short time from Friday to Sunday morning.

Today we go to that tomb and find that it is empty, that Christ has come out of that tomb. And the emptiness of Christ's tomb is the only emptiness in the history of mankind that fills. The only emptiness that makes sense; an emptiness that becomes for us a source of hope. A source of hope that death does not mean the end, that death will not have the last word. We go, my dear ones, and we are filled with emptiness, we are filled with joy, because the Victor over death, hell and Satan lives, He has triumphed, in spite of the calculations of the godless Jews, who ordered Christ's tomb to be sealed with a heavy stone, lest His disciples perhaps come and steal the body.

HEARTS LIKE GRAVES

Dear faithful, this Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection, however, makes us aware of a very sad reality. It makes us aware that a whole mass of people living today, a whole mass of present-day Catholics, including those Catholics of tradition, have become like a grave. They have become for Christ a grave, a grave in which faith in Him has died. A grave in which hope for the resurrection has died. A grave in which love for the Risen One has died. We look around us and we see a world full of graves walking on two legs, people dead inside, people empty inside, people living without meaning and without hope.

Dear faithful, on this Sunday of the Lord's Resurrection, rejoicing in the victory of Christ, trusting that we too, together with Him, will become victors over death, hell and Satan, we cannot help thinking of all those who have rejected the Risen One. The past week was a very difficult week. This Holy Week, when we consider, when we look at human perversity. The very same people who on Palm Sunday cried out: „Hosanna to the Son of David," on Good Friday cried out: „Away with Him, crucify Him." If we were to listen to the echo that carries through the world today, 2000 years after the death of the Lord Jesus, we would discover with horror that the echo that fills the world today is the echo of the cry from Good Friday: „Away with Him, crucify Him."

And the rejection of Christ inevitably leads to spiritual death, because only Christ the Lord is the Giver of life for our souls. How many spiritual corpses there are around us today, those who will not rise from spiritual death, those for whom sin has become their daily bread. Those for whom blasphemy, mockery of the Lord God, have become something ordinary. We must pray, my dear ones, for these spiritual corpses, for these hearts that have become like a cold grave, for these hearts that are weighed down by a heavy stone, a stone that they are not able to cast off by themselves, to cast off which, to roll away which they need God's grace, they need a Saviour, but they do not seek Him. They do not ask Him for help, and with every day, with every hour, they sink into ever greater hatred of the true God.

GOLGOTHA AND THE TOMB

Dear faithful, today we all go, we make a pilgrimage in spirit to the Holy City of Jerusalem and gaze at the emptiness of God's Tomb, but we also look toward Calvary, toward Golgotha, where on Friday the Saviour, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, hung on the altar of the Cross, accomplishing the sacrifice of propitiation by which we were redeemed.

And those of you who have been to Jerusalem, visiting the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, no doubt had the opportunity to notice, to visit a very special place which lies at the foot of Golgotha. The Chapel of Adam. We remember, my dear ones, in the Gospel, in the account of the Lord's Passion, in the Passion we read that at the moment of the Saviour's death there was a great earthquake, so that rocks were split. And the rock on which the Cross stood, Golgotha, was split as well. That crack is visible to this day. A crack from the top, where the Cross stood, down several metres to the cave in which our forefather Adam was buried. A crack that becomes a witness to the redemption accomplished on the Cross. For when the rock split, the blood that flowed down from the Cross flowed further through the rock, as far as the cave in which Adam lay, and washed his skull. Redemption, washing in Christ's blood, without which there is no salvation.

And we make a pilgrimage in soul to those places, somehow inaccessible, closed to Christian pilgrims by a state that sits wherever it wants. We make a pilgrimage there in spirit and bow down before these two relics, which are a witness, a tangible proof of everything we read in the Passion. Golgotha and the Tomb of God, a dozen or so metres apart, but those dozen or so metres, that road, the Good Friday road of Christ's body wrapped in the shroud, that road from death to the tomb is the most important road in the history of the whole world. The road leading from death to life. And it depends only on you whether you will want to follow that road which was opened for you on Good Friday. It depends only on you whether you will want to walk after Christ, whether you are ready to go with Him through Calvary to the morning of the Resurrection.

RISING WITH CHRIST

Let us not be fools, my dear ones, so that, as we consider the mysteries of our redemption, as we meditate on this holy night, the one night that knows the hour, the exact hour of the Resurrection, we may make the right choice: to rise. The Resurrection that we honour is a call for us to rise, to lie no longer crushed by the weight of our daily life, crushed by cares, sorrows, fear, but we are to rise from the dead, and so to rise. To rise in order to walk with Christ toward His kingdom, that kingdom which will have no end.

The Roman Empire has passed away, the Roman emperors who persecuted the Church have passed away, all the great empires, the kingdoms of this world, have passed away. But the Church of Christ endures and will endure, for she is the work of God Himself. She is like an ark. An ark that allows us to find refuge, that allows us to survive the flood of heresy, of apostasy, of sin that is inundating the modern world.

My dear ones, let us therefore rise with Christ and together with Christ walk toward that kingdom which will have no end. Everything in this world passes away, and you, one day, will be shut up in a cold, dark tomb, but what happens next depends on you. It depends on you what your eternity will look like. It depends on you whether you will find yourself where for ever you will gaze upon the radiant face of the Risen Christ. Or whether you will find yourself where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, without end.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.