

## LIVING FRATERNITY

**Theme: « Peace is born from the Encounter with Christ »**

In the month of June, we are proposing a reflection on a commentary on the readings from the Sunday of Divine Mercy, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 by Archbishop Francesco Follo. It is an invitation to contemplate the risen Christ from whose pierced side springs his mercy.

**Recall:** *Our monthly meeting should favor a meeting with Christ.* A spirit of prayer heralds a good encounter, and good preparation promotes a communal experience. At the meeting, having a copy of the Holy Scriptures, the Rule and the General Constitutions, will provide clarity and depth for our edification and experience.

*Good preparation – Good reflection*

### JUNE 2018 MONTHLY MEETING

#### Peace and forgiveness

The liturgy of this Second Sunday of Easter celebrates the risen Christ who gives peace and forgiveness. In fact, today's Gospel tells us that, on the evening of his Passover, Jesus enters the Upper Room, where the Apostles were locked up, and tells them: "Peace be with you". With the offering of the gift of his peace, Christ fills the heart of the apostles with his mercy. The traditional Jewish greeting *shalom*, that is peace, on the mouth of the Risen Lord is not only a wish but a gift: the gift of the peace that only He can give and which is the fruit of his radical victory over evil. The "peace" that Jesus offers to his friends is the fruit of God's merciful love for men. This immeasurable love has led Christ to die on the cross and to shed all his blood as a meek and humble Lamb "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

This explains why St. John Paul II wished to name "Sunday of Divine Mercy" this Sunday after Easter, which celebrates Christ as the Lamb who has been sacrificed for our sins and who has risen by defeating death and sin. The love of God is stronger than evil and death, and in the risen Christ love and mercy have won.

On this Feast of Divine Mercy, let us fill our hearts with the mercy of God who freely loves, forgives and gives peace. Indeed, this peace is the fruit of the victory of God's love over evil; it is the fruit of forgiveness. True peace, profound peace, comes from experiencing God's mercy.

Today, to us, as about two thousand years ago to the Apostles, Jesus gives, along with his peace, the Holy Spirit so that we may spread in the world his mercy that forgives and gives new and true life. Today, it is to us that Christ gives the mandate to bring to men the remission of sins.

Consequently, the Kingdom of love will grow and peace in hearts will be sown so that it may also be affirmed in our relationships in the family and in society.

### **Reflection and sharing:**

What article from our Rule can you associate with this text? Which one and why? Take the time to reflect and share your thoughts. (About 15 minutes) When the members have finished sharing, continue reading.

### **Missionaries without fear**

Today, the Spirit of the Risen Christ drives out fear from our hearts. Jesus urges us to leave the “Cenacle” that the fear has transformed into a locked place. His Spirit pushes us to be an “outgoing Church” (Pope Francis): “As the Father has sent me, I send you” (John 20, 21). During the last supper the Cenacle was the place where Jesus had given the bread, but, after the passion and death of the Messiah, for the Apostles, that hall had become as a sepulcher. They lived there in fear, and in fear of death.

But the fear of the Apostles and of all of us does not stop Christ. In the same way as the great stone that sealed his tomb was not an obstacle to him, so our fear is not an obstacle for him. He comes in this sepulcher, full of fear and with locked doors. The bolted doors were not an obstacle for him, as the sepulcher stone was not. Above all, it was not difficult for him to come to these people whom He had chosen and of whom one had betrayed him, the other denied him, the others fled and abandoned him. In the same way, as he then entered the place where his Apostles had taken refuge, so today he comes to meet us driving away our fears. It is there that He makes us rise.

After Christ’s encounter with Mary Magdalene in love and in desire, this meeting in the Cenacle is important because it makes us understand that the risen Christ meets us there, where we died in our fears, in our frailties, in our sins, and in our selfishness, to make us rise through joy and peace.

Today, it is to us that the Risen One says: “Peace be with you” (Jn 20, 19.21.26). It is evident that it is not just a greeting. It is a gift, the gift that the Risen Lord gives us, his friends. It is a gift to share. Therefore, this peace, purchased by Christ with his blood, is also a task. It is not just for us, it is for everyone, and we, the disciples of today, must take it everywhere in the world.

In this way, we participate in the peaceful battle begun by the Easter of Christ, helping him to affirm his victory with his own weapons: those of justice and truth, of mercy, of forgiveness and of love. These weapons do not kill but give life and peace.

### **Reflection and Sharing:**

Which article of our Rule comes to mind after listening to this reading? Why, explain the link. (About 15 minutes). Afterwards, continue with the reading.

## Witnesses of Joy

In today's Gospel Jesus says many times: "Peace be with you" and the disciples "rejoiced". Joy and peace are the sign of the presence of the risen Christ.

Why is the experience of the risen Jesus who stands among us and shows us his hands and his side, an experience of peace and joy? Because we know who we are for Christ and who Christ is for us. He is the one who carries those nailed hands and that pierced side for us. He is infinite love who gives himself. And we, who are we for him? We are a finite, limited love that expands in his Love.

The pierced side shows the heart that loves infinitely and totally. The nailed hands show that the power of God is to wash the feet and to be nailed to the service of love for man. That is where we recognize the Lord. In these hands, we see the whole life of Jesus, all that He has done at the service of love, with a Love so extreme as to die for it to give life.

We are all called to respond to this resurrected Love. How? Witnessing Christ with joy.

It is as St. Augustine taught already in *De sacra virginitate*: "Therefore go on, Saints of God, boys and girls, males and females, unmarried men, and women; go on and persevere unto the end. Praise more sweetly the Lord, Whom ye think on more richly: hope more happily in Him, Whom ye serve more instantly: love more ardently Him, whom you please more attentively."

### Reflection and Sharing:

What draws our attention in this text? In which article do we find the reference to being witness to joy? Share your thoughts. (About 15 minutes).

### Help for Research:

**Rule** – take a copy of the Rule and read the following articles: 6, 19.1 and 19.2 – would these be the correct articles?

**General Constitutions** – complementary articles – 17, 23, 24.1, 24.2, 26.1, 27 – make the link with the articles from the Rule.

If the fraternity find other references that these, then that would demonstrate to you that your research bears fruit and you know the rule of life to which you have committed yourself.

### Biblical Reflection:

Read the Gospel of Sunday of Divine Mercy (John 20. 19-31) or the Gospel of the day. Share your thoughts on this gospel, using the following questions:

1. To whom does it speak? What does it teach us?

2. How does it reach us personally?
3. Is it a message of hope? Another kind of message? How and why?

### **Life-Objective**

Durant the month of June, at the start of vacation time, let us thank the Creator for his marvellous creation and take, if possible, time to admire it, praise I and protect it as our patron saint Francis of Assisi did ...

### **Events and information from the Church and the Order**

Recall the local and regional meetings and activities.

If possible, celebrate the 40 years of our Rule of life in fraternity.

**End of the meeting:** (song or prayer chosen by the fraternity)

Suggestion: together pray the following prayer

### **Praises of God**

You are holy, Lord, the only God. You do wonders.

You are strong; You are great; You are the most high;

You are the almighty King, You, Holy Father, the King of heaven and earth.

You are three and One, Lord God of gods. You are good, all good, the highest good,  
Lord, God, living and true.

You are love, charity. You are wisdom; You are humility; You are patience.

You are beauty; You are meekness; You are security;

You are inner peace; You are joy; You are our hope and joy;

You are justice; You are moderation; You are all our riches.

You are beauty; You are meekness;

You are the protector. You are our guardian and defender;

You are strength; You are refreshment.

You are our hope; You are our faith; You are our charity;

You are all our sweetness;

You are our eternal life:

Great and wonderful Lord,

God almighty, Merciful Savior.

**To each and every one, we wish a very beautiful summer, where praise and gratitude will be honoured.**