



William Cardinal Goh

~ Easter 2024 ~

THE RISEN LORD ACCOMPANIES US IN OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Alleluia! Christ the Lord is risen! During the season of Lent, the Invitatory Psalm of the Divine Office began with this antiphon, “Christ the Lord was tempted and suffered for us, come let us adore Him.” This antiphon is not merely saying that Christ was tempted and that He suffered, but that He went through all these for our sake. Indeed, the passion of Christ which we celebrated is the climax of the incarnation, when God assumed our humanity in Christ and suffered the full burden of what all human beings have to go through in life each day – temptations, anxieties, pain, fear, hunger, injustices, betrayal, false accusations, being misunderstood, taken for granted, used and abused, manipulated, despised, ridiculed, humiliated, and sickness and death. Jesus went through all these to truly journey with us in life and in death.

By His death and resurrection, Jesus gave us a sure hope that all we go through in our humanity will flower in the resurrection. His resurrection gives us confidence that suffering will be overcome by those who have faith in God and are willing to walk the way of our Lord. It is for good reason that Jesus calls Himself, the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). We are called to walk the way that our Lord trod so that we will also enjoy the triumph of the resurrection over sin, hatred, selfishness, and even death. **Jesus did not just suffer for us; He was raised *for our sake as well!*** Without the resurrection, the mysteries of life would be inexplicable. Christ’s life, death, and resurrection are the answers to the riddles of suffering, sin, death, and life.

It is significant that after His resurrection, the angel instructed the women at the tomb to “go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’” (Matthew 28:7).

Indeed, the Lord has gone before us so that we will not walk alone. He has shown us the destination and the way. In Luke’s gospel, the evangelist narrated the experience of the disciples at Emmaus when the Lord walked with them as they were going away from Jerusalem – downcast, disillusioned, disappointed, and sad at what happened to their master. As He walked with them, He explained to them “beginning with Moses and all the prophets... the things about himself in all the scriptures.” He said, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26), and then, “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:30-32).

Consequently, as the resurrected disciples of our Lord today, we must walk in faith, and always with the Risen Lord. Where is the Risen Lord to be found? He is found in the scriptures, especially when we share the Word of God with our fellow brothers and sisters. He is encountered in the sacraments, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. As a resurrected people, we must walk with each other as a community so that we can recognise and encounter His presence in our lives. When we share our food, struggles, joys, and life with each other; when we share the Word of God together; worship and pray together, the Risen Lord is in our midst. This was what the early Church did (Acts 2:43-47). If there are some Christians who have not yet encountered the Risen Lord, it is because they walk alone in this journey of faith. When we are cut off from others, from our fellow brothers and sisters in faith, because of sin, selfishness, individualism, and pride, we cannot encounter the Risen Lord.

Today, the Risen Lord is present in a real way when we strive to be a synodal Church at every level of Christian and Church life. To be a synodal Church is to walk with each other, in good times, and in bad, always forgiving each other and encouraging each other along the way, never giving up hope on each other. We are called to share our faith, our struggles, our pains, our joys, and aspirations as Church, as part of parish neighbourhood groups, members of church ministries, parish councils, and organisations, and in the larger Church – those working in the Archdiocesan offices, movements, and in the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Priests, religious, and laity must walk as one Church, one body of the Risen Lord, with Christ as our head. We cannot walk alone. We must walk with each other in this journey of life, so that we can leave the desert of sin and enter into the Promised Land of love and life. We do not walk alone, but the Lord walks with us. He has gone ahead of us and He is in our midst. Be brave, take courage, as the Lord told His disciples, “I have conquered the world.” (John 16:33).

However, let us not reduce the Church to an enclave among Christians. The Church is not a club house where like-minded people come together. The Church exists for mission. If we are called to encounter the Risen Lord in our community, it is in order that we can go out, as our Lord commanded, to the world to proclaim the Good News; the New Life that the Lord has come to give us. We are to heal the wounds of our fellowmen, to alleviate the sufferings of others, to enlighten the world of falsehoods and half-truths, to appeal to world leaders to come to their senses by putting an end to all wars and the destruction of innocent and vulnerable lives, and to deliver our people from the delusions of the Evil One, for whom power, glory, success, and pleasure is everything (Mark 16:17). Indeed, just as the angel “opened the prison doors” for Peter and John and “brought them out, and said ‘Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life’”, we, too, must go out of our prison, of ourselves, and announce to the whole world that “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Yours devotedly in Christ,

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Archbishop of Singapore
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