

Khristòs anésti! Alithós anésti!
Christus resurrexit! Vere resurrexit!
Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of us, I am sure, are familiar with the bronze sculpture depicting a man of heroic size, seated on a large rock, leaning forward, his right elbow placed upon his left thigh, with the back of his right hand supporting his chin in a posture suggestive of deep thought; that is, The Thinker.

Were any of us to graduate with a doctorate in philosophy from a certain university in Austria, we would receive as a graduation gift from that university a small, wooden carving of The Thinker. This carving, though, would be unique. The man seated in a thinking pose would appear all bloodied with a crown of thorns on his head. That is because this carving would, in fact, depict Christ the Thinker, signifying the reality that, despite the brilliant thinkers and the incredible ideas that came before him, no one could make out the true meaning of suffering – until Christ.

And what did Christ do? He came not to take away suffering, but to give it purpose, to give it meaning. Thanks to Christ's suffering, individuals can unite their suffering with his on the Cross to participate in the salvation of souls. Thanks to Jesus, suffering now acts as a spiritual tool to transform pain into an act of love, reparation, and divine worship.

But even Christ's suffering would not have made sense without the Resurrection. "If Christ has not been raised," writes St. Paul, "then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain [...] you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:14-17).

Pope Benedict XVI, during his General Audience in St. Peter's Square on November 5, 2008, explained how St. Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, makes clear the decisive importance he attributes to the Resurrection of Jesus. "In this event, in fact, lies the solution to the problem posed by the drama of the Cross. The Cross alone could not explain the Christian faith, indeed it would remain a tragedy [...] The Pashal Mystery consists in the fact that the Crucified man 'was raised on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures', as proto-Christian tradition attests. [...] The Resurrection is a fundamental fact, [...] He who was crucified and who thus manifested God's immense love for man, is risen again, and is alive among us."

Thus, "we can say with Paul that the true believer obtains salvation by professing with his mouth that Jesus is the Lord and believing in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead [...] but it is not enough to carry our faith in our heart, we must confess it and bear witness to it with our mouths, with our lives, thus making the truth of the Cross and the Resurrection present in our history. In this way the Christian becomes part of that process by which the first Adam, a creature of the earth, and subject to corruption and death, is transformed into the last Adam, heavenly and incorruptible. This process was set in motion by the Resurrection of Christ, and it is, therefore, on this that we found our hope that we too may one day enter with Christ into our true homeland, which is in Heaven. Borne up by this hope, let us continue with courage and with joy" (*ibid.*)

A blessed and joyous Easter to you and to your loved ones. Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Father Frei