



EASTER 2012

Dear Confreres, Sisters, Associates and friends,

“Do not be afraid! You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen... Go, tell the disciples...” (Mark 16, 6-7).

With these words spoken at the empty tomb, the Gospel for the Easter Vigil invites us into the heart of the paschal mystery. Do not be afraid. Do not look for Jesus among the dead. He is not to be found in an empty tomb. The Crucified One is risen! Go and tell his disciples. Tell the world.

The season of Lent, and especially the days of Holy Week have prepared us to enter more deeply into this mystery. With Jesus, and as a community of disciples, we have walked the path from Galilee to Jerusalem. We live this journey today.

We too have experienced the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter. We recognize this reality in our contemporary world, and in each of our lives. But we have also witnessed the faithfulness of Mary, the women disciples and the beloved disciple, which brought them to the foot of the Cross. We recognize this same faithfulness in the lives of so many mothers and wives, sons and fathers, confreres and associates. And this faithfulness often brings them to the foot of the Cross today.

We have shared the intimacy of Bethany, the Upper Room, and the Garden of Gethsemane in our communities and families, as well as in moments of prayer and Eucharist, reconciliation and friendship. But we have also witnessed the public spectacle of hatred, violence and crucifixion, which continues in a world torn apart by war, poverty, disease and destitution.

The mystery of Easter affirms the truth that God lives this same experience of faithfulness and betrayal, intimacy and violence, death and new life. Dying on the Cross, Jesus shares our humanity to the very end. There could be no

greater affirmation of the Incarnation. Jesus is one with us – God truly is Emmanuel – even in death, and the brutal death of crucifixion.

Raising Jesus from the dead, God insists that death will not have the last word. Hatred and violence will not triumph. At the heart of all human experience, the power of the resurrection continues to unfold God’s plan of abundant redemption for all. The mystery of Easter is the mystery of love without limits.

Many of us have been deeply involved in intense pastoral ministry during these days – through popular missions and liturgical celebrations, accompanying communities and individuals, through celebrations, processions, and catechesis. Easter Sunday dawns with fresh promise and hope, and fills us with joy.

Like the disciples in the days following the resurrection, we too return to our ordinary, daily lives. They returned to Galilee and went fishing! And Jesus found them there. This too is the mystery of Easter. The gospel accounts begin with the women disciples looking for Jesus, and these gospel accounts conclude with Jesus finding the disciples. He is with us always, everywhere and in every situation of our lives.

My prayer this Easter is that our lives may be penetrated more and more by this presence of Jesus the Redeemer, so that we “become signs and witnesses before people of the power of his resurrection, proclaiming the new and eternal life” (Constitution 51). Filled with his Spirit, may we proclaim the Gospel ever anew!

May we experience ever more fully the joy, peace and power of the Risen Jesus, our Redeemer! May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help, accompany us as she accompanied the first disciples!

**Your brother in the Redeemer,
Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.
Superior General**