

Monthly Reflection:

April 2022



And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." ...
"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."
Rev. 21:5-7

The liturgical season of Lent-Easter is dawning on us amid the war in Ukraine, with grief over the victims and the millions forced to leave their universities, workplaces and homes, and not least, the environmental ruin pounded on our already fragile planet. Wars are born in hearts resilient to sin and bent on sowing the wind, only to reap the whirlwind (cf. Hos 8, 7). At a time when working together for reconciliation and peace is urgent, the world is being ripped apart, engulfed by agonies that are manifold and pervasive. Yet, during these setbacks, the season of Lent-Easter points to the anchor of hope, communion, and peace.

During this holiest season, the Church is drawn to the wellsprings of her faith. The fulcrum of Christian celebration is the new and abiding covenant which God lovingly offers to the world by gifting his Son, Jesus. In the eternal bond of love and obedience and perfecting himself through suffering, Jesus the Lamb of God, offered himself to the Father for our sake as propitiation for the sins of the world. By raising Jesus from the dead, the Father not only revealed his pleasure in the Son, but also established him as the "light of the nations" (*lumen gentium*). God has placed the Risen Christ as the progenitor of our peace, who through his blood ransoms the people (Rev 5). The Lamb alone is worthy and able to unravel the meaning of the history and pilgrimage of humanity, for he is the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is, who was, and who is to come.

The Risen Christ is present in all situations of the human story. In a special way, He is present in the sufferings of humanity and of the environment. In this closeness to

humanity, His presence becomes tangible and identifiable in the closeness of the Church to every human person everywhere. The body of Christ is not immune to the sufferings of humanity. Indeed she suffers and completes in her body the paschal mystery of Christ (Col 1, 24).

The Risen Christ is the wellspring of salvation and bedrock of hope for a wounded and broken world. On opening one's heart with humble trust and simplicity of faith to this fountain of salvation, there wells up within, the Holy Spirit, who flows into the heart of the believer from the Risen Christ (John 7). It is this spirit of love poured into the heart of the believer (Rom 5) that enables the Christian to call God as Abba-Father.

The Holy Spirit also gives the gift of repentance and reconciliation and true desire for peace. It is the Spirit that generates and animates the way of renewing and mending the broken world. Love and Forgiveness are at the heart of the new life which Jesus offers in proclaiming the reign of God. The Kingdom is prepared for those who are willing to listen and care for each other and strive for fraternity among the people. This bond of kinship is born out of the paternity of God, whom Jesus revealed as Abba-Father. God does not exclude anyone from the embrace of mercy. He wants only that the message of love be accepted freely and honestly.

Through his Son and in the Holy Spirit, God offers himself in love for the unloving and the unloved; for the sinner and the weak; for those who look for a renewed world and fairness. The success stories of reconciliation and peace are born in the anvil of suffering, when people are ready to acknowledge the wrong and pain inflicted on the innocent and vulnerable by our rash and commercial handling of persons and goods. The season calls for an attentive hearing of the cry of our world arising from the abysmal sorrows present in our history.

With this understanding, how can we see Lent as the ideal time for a spiritual dating, (a time of preparation) for Easter which is the time of spiritual union with the Risen Lord? How can we offer ourselves in love to be broken like Jesus, and like him to be conquerors, and sons/daughters of God, through (1) Fasting and Hunger, (2) Almsgiving and Worship and (3) Prayer and Trusting, in order to bring peace, hope and communion, and so mend the brokenness of the world?

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