

I WANT *to* KNOW CHRIST *and* THE POWER *of* HIS RESURRECTION

Phil. 3:10

Reflection:

April 2021

Man is in a constant quest; each one of us carries within us a deep yearning for something intangible. Like prodigal sons, many seek fulfillment in a life of 'freedom', which is, to them, to do what their carnal desires dictate. Many others try to satiate their desires, involving themselves in intellectual or mental pursuits. These pursuits, even when wrapped up in spiritual labels do not truly satisfy one's heart but lead to further quests and pursuits.

Only the experience of the Absolute gives the ultimate answer to the unique quest in each human person. At the end of all his struggles and quests, Saint Augustine poignantly said in *Confessions*: "You have made me for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Blessed is the moment when on this search for meaning, a person discovers the pearl of great price - Jesus. Out of sheer joy, he gladly goes and sells everything he has to make this pearl his own. Cherishing this pearl in his heart, Augustine exclaims "Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness, I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you, they would not have been at all... You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in the breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace."

After such an encounter, a person is at peace. His plethora of desires, which used to pull him in various directions until then, slowly merge into a single desire like the various tributaries that merge into a mighty river on its way to meet the Sea. To know this resplendent Christ, more and more, becomes the sole passion that consumes him. Every challenge, opportunity, failure or disappointment serve as an opening to know Christ better. Since through baptism, he has been buried and raised with Christ, he knows that he can experience the power of His resurrection in all the events of his life. Even though baptism 'erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, the consequences of nature that weaken and incline to evil, persist in man, and summon him to spiritual battle' (CCC. 405). If the power of the blood cleanses us of the misdeeds of the past, the power of His resurrection enables us to 'will and do what is good and pleasing to Him' (Phil. 2:13).

Throughout this Lent, we have been seeking God, meditating on His passion and death to grow in true contrition. As the Easter season approaches, let us deepen our desires. Let us focus on the Risen Christ. Knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection is indeed the most important experience a Christian needs. Even more so for a Jesus Youth, who has taken a commitment to be a missionary disciple.

The Scripture says, "Rivers of living water will flow from the heart of anyone who believes in me!" (Jn. 7: 38). A believer's life has to thus become a river of living water. The challenge for Jesus Youth today is, whether we can be, individually or as a family of faith, a river of living water that helps to quench the thirst of many more seekers of the Infinite God. For this to happen, the eyes of our heart have to be enlightened, to know the immeasurable greatness of His power for us who believe. (cf. Eph. 1:18-19). Let us fervently desire and pray like St. Paul, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection". Let this be the supreme thirst that moves us in this earthly sojourn - in our personal lives, families, ministries, career, hobbies etc. He will indeed satisfy us for He thirsted for us on the Cross in order that we will thirst for Him more than anything else.

Bishop Alex Vadakumthala

Bishop of Kannur Diocese in Kerala, India. He is a great friend of the movement and the Ecclesiastical Advisor of Jesus Youth, India.

