

Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus

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Superior General

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Jesus of Nazareth was a man commended to you by God by the miracles, portents and signs that God worked through him ...Him you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him but God raised him to life and we are all witnesses to this (Acts 2, 22f)

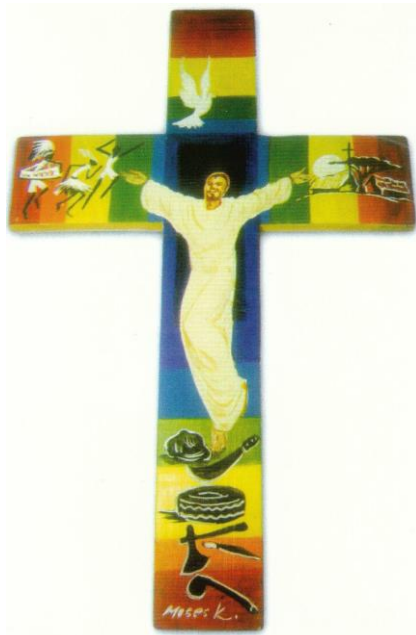
Dear Confreres,

Gathered at this time for days of Consulta, the General Council would like to wish each one of you a Holy Easter in the Joy and Peace of the Risen Christ.

Unlike in past years, this year Easter seems to have come quickly, speedily and almost unexpectedly. Time seems to pass more quickly or perhaps it is the events that surprise us and make us feel the urgency of Easter, the desire to celebrate like Jesus and with Jesus: "There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress until it is over!" (Lk. 12, 49).

We celebrate the Easter of Jesus, the Easter of the Apostles and the Easter of each one of us. We celebrate the Easter of the peoples who dream of a more just and fraternal world. We celebrate the Easter of creation that awaits its renewal and to be made a new creation in Christ. In truth, we are all of

us sighing with ineffable sighs as we await our liberation: "From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first fruits of the Spirit" (Rm. 8, 22-23).



From the beginning of this year 2018, the Lord made us experience in a very concrete way the meaning of this feast through the passing of some of our confreres – six in all – whom the Father called to himself. They have celebrated their definitive Easter. Some left us unexpectedly, like Fr. Rogelio Bustos Juárez, a member of the General Council. For him, Easter came early, without warning. For others, Easter was announced with time for a journey of slow and troublesome purification. But in all situations, Easter comes through suffering, detachment and losing oneself in the will of the Father: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me! But let your will be done, not mine!".

During the visits we made this year, as the General Council, to Uganda, South Sudan, Togo, Ghana, Benin and Congo, we touched the signs of the passion of Jesus in the life of these peoples.

Nevertheless, the signs of the Resurrection are even more plentiful, revealed in the dreams of youth, the beauty of children, and the resistance of adults. And in the dedicated lives of so many pastors, catechists and of our missionaries, witnesses to the Resurrection, true signs of the fact that God continues to raise Jesus of Nazareth each day.

Dear confreres, we want to invite you to live this Easter in a simple and humble manner, convinced that Jesus has truly overcome our death, our suffering and that of the world. We encourage you to live it like the grain of wheat that dies in order to bear much fruit; like the pilgrim who goes through the night of pain and despair by keeping his eyes fixed on the light that emanates from the Risen One; like the women at the sepulchre who “looking up, saw that the stone had already been rolled away, even though it was very big”; like the apostles in the Cenacle who, hearing the words of Jesus, “Peace be with you!”, are filled with joy; like the disciples of Emmaus who accept the company of the unknown pilgrim who makes their hearts burn as he explains the Scriptures to them and reveals himself in the breaking of bread; like Comboni who lived the Mission under the sign of the Glorious Cross of the Risen One: *“The Cross is my sole comfort because it is the mark of the Work of God. After the passion and death of Jesus Christ there came the resurrection. The same will happen in Central Africa* (Writings 5559).

We wish you a time of profound joy in which we let ourselves be fascinated by the glorious presence of the Risen One who has overcome death and today continues to overcome every kind of death in our world. He makes his light shine on us, filling us with hope, opening our eyes to his ineffable Presence!

The General Council