

Courtesy Translation

Vatican City, March 25th, 2021

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

the greeting that the first Christians used was: "*Christ is risen!*" and they then would reply: "*He is truly risen!*". There was no more beautiful and sincere greeting between two Christians than this. Through these words, indeed, they exchanged the deepest feeling that they had in their hearts. This feeling was their faith and hope in the risen Christ.

They greeted each other and professed the same faith aloud and felt united by a very deep relationship. They really felt like they were brothers and sisters united not by a bond of blood or human friendship, but by the same faith and the same hope in the risen Jesus. They recognized themselves as part of the same family that Jesus himself had created by bringing together those who had placed their faith and hope in Him, a bond which is so strong that even death can never break. This family is the Church, one in Heaven and the other on the earth, that is always enriched with new children, as it also happens in a very significant way on the night of the Easter Vigil, when the catechumens receive baptism, confirmation and first communion.

In this Easter 2021, which is still so full of sufferings because of the pandemic, that for more than a year has upset our habits and our lifestyle, I would like to use the old Christian greeting: «*Christ is risen!*». I would like to hear from you, as Constantinian brothers and sisters, the following reply: "*He has truly risen!*"

We need to recover the truth of the signs, of the gestures, of the words of our faith: today more than ever we know that many people are even more fragile and lost in the recognition of hope; in this situation, that has been worsened by the pandemic, they ignore Christ and, pushed by the so-called secular and secularized society, base their existence on materialism and relativism. Having difficulties in seeing hope, it is even more difficult to tackle sufferings and deprivation.

Christ, full of Grace, offers to those who believe in him Mary, his Mother, Queen of the angels, saints, martyrs and our most tender Mother, and also gives the example and consolation of the saints and martyrs who did not yield in their faith and love for the Church. Noticing the terrible persecutions still ongoing in many countries of the world, the answer is clear: their strengths are the faith and the hope in risen Jesus.

Jesus was and is with them; they placed their hope in His hands. In Christ the Church, mother and teacher, indicates them not only by their example but also and above all as companions on the path of life so that they illuminate and intercede for all our spiritual and material needs.

Pope Francis has also repeatedly returned to the teaching of the "communion of saints" and this year 2021 he wanted to put at the center of our devotion the extraordinary and gigantic figure of Saint Joseph,

husband of the Virgin, putative father of Christ, patron of the universal Church. Saint Joseph is also particularly venerated by our Constantinian Order and the Royal House of Bourbon Two Sicilies.

Dear friends, I hope that Easter awakens in everyone the hope that arises from the encounter with the Risen One: the saints and martyrs show us how this is an invincible force even in the face of evil and the threat of death. Those who have this hope can overcome fear and find in themselves the strength to spend themselves for love, in any condition and without too many calculations, because they know that living to love means imitating Christ, the new Man, finding in Him the meaning and the fullness of life.

I am asking this Easter grace for each one of us, and I am sending to you my wishes again:

"Christ is risen; He has truly risen".

I bless you.

Renato Raffaele Card. Martino

Proto-deacon of the Holy Roman Church

Grand Prior