

FEATURE

'In the risen Christ all creation rises to new life'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Here is the Vatican's English translation of Pope John Paul II's Easter message "urbi et orbi" (to the city and to the world) delivered April 15.

1. "In the risen Christ all creation rises to new life."

May the Easter proclamation reach all the peoples of the earth and may all people of good will feel themselves called to an active role in this day which the Lord has made, the day of his resurrection, when the church, filled with joy, proclaims that the Lord is truly risen. This cry which burst forth from the hearts of the disciples on the first day after the Sabbath has spanned the centuries and now, at this precise moment of history, renews once more humanity's hopes with the unaltered certainty of the resurrection of Christ, the redeemer of mankind.

2. "In the risen Christ all creation rises to new life."

The amazed surprise of the Apostles and the women who rushed to the tomb at sunrise today becomes the shared experience of the whole people of God. As the new millennium begins its course, we wish to hand on to the younger generation the certitude that is basic to our lives: Christ is risen and in him all creation rises to new life.

"Glory to you, O Christ Jesus, today and always you will reign"

We are reminded of this faith-filled hymn, which we sang so many times during the course of the jubilee praising him who is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13). To him the pilgrim church remains faithful "amid the world's persecutions and God's consolations" (St. Augustine). She looks to him and has no fear. She walks with her gaze fixed on his face, and repeats to the men and women of our day that he, the Risen One, is "the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb 13:8).

3. On that tragic Friday of the passion, which saw the Son of Man become "obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8), the earthly phase of the Redeemer's life came to a close. Now dead, he was hurriedly placed in the tomb, at the setting of the sun. A singular sunset! The ominous darkness of that hour signaled the end of the "first act" of creation, convulsed by sin. It seemed like the victory of death, the triumph of evil. Instead, while the tomb lay in cold silence, the plan of salvation was approaching its fulfillment, and the "new creation" was about to begin. Made obedient by love even to the extreme sacrifice, Jesus Christ



Reuters/CNS
Pope John Paul II leans against a cross during the Way of the Cross at Rome's Colosseum on Good Friday, April 13. He walked the last three stations.

is now "exalted" by God, who "has bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9). In this name every human life recovers hope. In this name, human beings are freed from the power of sin and death and restored to life and to love.

4. On this day heaven and earth sing out the ineffable and sublime "name" of the Crucified One who has risen. Everything appears as before, but in fact nothing is the same as before. He, the life that does not die, has redeemed every human life and reopened it to hope.

"The old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Every project and plan of this noble and fraternal creature that is man has a new "name" today in Christ risen

from the dead, for "in him all creation rises to new life." The words of Genesis are fully fulfilled in this new creation: "Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'" (Gen 1:26). At Easter, Christ, the new Adam, having become "a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45), ransoms the old Adam from the defeat of death.

5. Men and women of the third millennium, the Easter gift of light that scatters the darkness of fear and sadness is meant for everyone; all are offered the gift of the peace of the risen Christ, who breaks the chains of violence and hatred. Rediscover today with joy and wonder that the world is no longer a slave to the inevitable. This world of ours can change: Peace is possible even where for too long there has been fighting and death, as in the Holy Land and Jerusalem; it is possible in the Balkans, no longer condemned to a worrying uncertainty that risks causing the failure of all proposals for agreement.

And you, Africa, a continent tormented by conflicts constantly threatening, raise your head confidently, trusting in the power of the risen Christ. With his help, you too, Asia, the cradle of age-old spiritual traditions, can win the challenge of tolerance and solidarity; and you, Latin America, filled with youthful promise, only in Christ will you find the capacity and courage needed for a development respectful of every human being.

Men and women of every continent, draw from his tomb, empty now forever, the strength needed to defeat the powers of evil and death, and to place all research and all technical and social progress at the service of a better future for all.

6. "In the Risen Christ all creation rises to new life."

From the moment when your tomb, O Christ, was found empty and Cephas, the disciples, the women, and "more than 500 brethren" (1 Cor 15:6) saw you risen, there began the time in which the whole of creation sings your name "which is above every other name" and awaits your final return in glory. During this time, between Easter and the coming of your everlasting kingdom, a time like the travail of giving birth (cf. Rom 8:22), sustain us in our dedication to building a more human world, a world soothed by the balm of your love, Paschal Victim offered for the salvation of the world, grant that this commitment of ours will not falter, even when weariness slows our steps. You, victorious King, grant to us and to the world eternal salvation!



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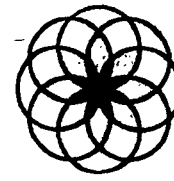
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