



# Interconnections

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"Living as Easter  
People in the  
Jubilee Year"

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*"We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song!"*

*(Pope St. John Paul II)*



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Easter signifies a new beginning - an invitation to transformation, a passage from death to life, from despair to hope. As Easter people, Christians are called to witness to this new life by bearing the fruits of joy, peace, and unwavering hope. This calling is not confined to the celebration of Easter Sunday but extends into the daily fabric of our lives - our relationships, our work, our communities, our families and even the quiet, hidden struggles of our hearts.

The recent and unexpected passing of Pope Francis on Easter Monday cast a deep shadow over the Church. His death, like that of Christ, brought sorrow, uncertainty, and fear. Yet, just as the Risen Christ appeared to His disciples, offering peace and rekindling their courage, we too have found consolation and strength in the election of our new Pope Leo XIV. His emergence as the new Shepherd of the Universal Church is a sign of God's enduring providence - a reminder that even in our mourning, God is at work, renewing His Church and leading His people forward.

In this Jubilee Year - a sacred time of grace and renewal - the call to live as Easter people takes on deeper urgency and meaning. It is not merely a call to believe in the resurrection but to live it. To live the resurrection is to embody the hope that comes from knowing death is not the end. It means becoming agents of justice in a world marked by division, hatred, and inequality. It means forgiving those who have wronged us, seeking reconciliation with those we have hurt, and choosing compassion over indifference. It means **allowing the power of Easter to shape the way we think, speak, and act - not only in moments of celebration but in every moment of our lives.**

Let us be Easter people in action - people whose lives proclaim, through every word and



deed, that He is risen. And because He is risen, we too can rise: above fear, above despair, and above the brokenness of our world. Christ's resurrection is not the end of the story but the beginning of a new one - a story we are all invited to write with our lives.

Our General Chapter 2020 declaration affirms that ***"every ending is, at the same time, a new beginning. Let us open ourselves, then, to the action of the Spirit, who continues to embrace our condition as unfinished people - yet capable of welcoming, with humility and hope, the new life that nothing can hinder, because Godself is its guarantor."***

As we celebrate Easter and journey through the Jubilee Year, let us remember: the resurrection is not a distant event; it is a living reality that calls us to transformation. Let us live as Easter people, embracing the hope, mercy, and restoration that the resurrection offers. And let us carry that hope into the world, offering a glimpse of the new life that Christ makes possible for all.

**Sr. Mercy Rani JEBAMALAI**



## *My experience of Pope Francis...*

I'm going to share with you briefly my experience of being blessed by Pope Francis. He was elected and died during my time in Rome, so this was a grace for me.

My first experience with him was on the day of his election. It was on **12 March 2013**, around 7pm that the white smoke came out of the Sistine Chapel. I was in the house watching television. As soon as the smoke turned white, Eithne Hughes accompanied Maristella SOOSAIPILLAI and me by car. What a joy it was for me to get there before he appeared.

It was there, with all the crowds that had rushed and waited in St Peter's Square, that I received the first blessing from the new Pope Francis.

The year after his pontificate began, in 2014, I was lucky enough to take part in his morning Mass celebrated in Santa Marta. It was on the occasion of my silver jubilee: 25 years of religious life. Pope Francis blessed me personally and I was given a few minutes to talk to him. My joy was even greater, because this time it was face to face.

A third blessing came in 2022, when the Holy Father postponed his visit to the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), my home country. He celebrated a Mass in the Congolese rite in St Peter's Basilica with the Congolese of

Italy in general and Rome in particular. I was chosen to carry the offerings. Bowing before him, he blessed what I was carrying and he also blessed me.

In addition to other general blessings I received at the Angelus or at Masses said by the Supreme Pontiff, I remember these special occasions well.

At his last Easter Mass in St Peter's Square in 2025, he appeared for the blessing. I stayed with the crowd to wait for him to go round in the Pope Mobile to greet and bless the crowd. It was the last blessing I received from Pope Francis, on the eve of his death.

When he died and I went to bow before his body on display in St Peter's Basilica, I remembered the journey I had made with him, without him knowing me particularly well. And I asked him to bless me from heaven and to pray for me, as he liked to repeat so that people would do for him.

At his funeral Mass in St. Peter's Square, I was still there to say **THANK YOU** for everything he had been for the Church and the world, praying above all for peace. It was also



a farewell to him, because he has been a great inspiration in my life from the beginning of his pontificate with his encyclical *'The Joy of the Gospel'* to *'Fratelli Tutti'*.

**Papa Francesco, pray for us!**

**Sr. Marie-Pierre OTIBA**  
**Generalate Local Community, Rome**

## *To Go Forward in Hope...*

A splendid day broke. Easter Monday! It was only yesterday that we experienced the joy of **'Sunday of the Resurrection'**. Some of the Sisters at the General House decided to participate in the High Mass at Saint Peter's, while some of us remained at home for our own celebration, and soon after Mass followed on the TV the **Urbi et Orbi blessing** that **Pope Francis** was to give to the crowd gathered in the Square. The multitude anxiously waited for the Pope to appear, and when he finally made it, joy and jubilation, cries and applause could be heard... We all saw and felt for Francis – sick, exhausted, breathless..., who with an extra effort pronounced his words just to wish us all a Happy Easter, and to deliver the special blessing to us in this Jubilee year of Hope. Still he found the strength to go round among the crowd in the Square, imparting blessings, being present, and being close to his people, to the Church, so hungry and thirsty for peace, for hope, and for signs of life and of love.

Then today, this wonderful, sunny day, the message came: **"The Pope is dead". "Pope Francis has gone to eternity"**. This news left us speechless: the Church, the world was in shock. I heard somebody saying **"He wished us Happy Easter and he blessed us yesterday!"** And like the disci-



ples of Emmaus, we started to realize that it was with those gestures of love, of mercy, and of hope that Pope Francis was saying good bye to us. That he gave "all" of himself up to the "end", up to the last moment of his life on earth.

It is during these moments of pain for this loss that images, gestures, words, and actions of Pope Francis started to overflow in our memories.

A pastor that is gone to meet **THE GOOD SHEPHERD**, yes; he blessed us and went... he took with himself the smell of his sheep. He left us with the challenges and calls made during the time of his great commitment to the Church and to the world. His calls and appeals are resonating as an echo in our ears and in our hearts.

Pope Francis has opened for us so many paths; he has given us so many concrete examples with his own lifestyle, and they speak more loudly than the words.

I question myself, to which of his calls and invitations am I ready to respond? Is there anything that I could start putting into practice? Perhaps I could emphasize in my everyday living the aspect of **HOPE**. I could be more of a person of hope in my words, in my endeavors, in my options and in my relationships.

To be a person of hope before a wounded world, of so many signs of death and desperation, a world of violence and deception from the world leaders, I need to open my eyes and my ears to see and to hear to the realities. I need to open my heart lest I remain in the indifference of which Pope Francis spoke to us. I need to always direct my gaze and my concern towards the vulnerable of society, to offer my solidarity and my commitment in seeking peace, in making my surroundings a habitable space. My heart is full of gratitude to Pope Francis! May he enjoy eternal happiness.

**Sr. Daniela MUZZACHI**  
**Generalate Local Community, Rome**

## *The First message of Pope Leo XIV to the World*

Pope Leo XIV greets the faithful and the world invoking peace and pledging to work for a united Church faithful to Jesus and to the Gospel.

Pope Leo XIV greeted the city of Rome and the world with these words at his first appearance as the Successor of Peter from the Central Loggia of St. Peter's Basilica: Peace be with you all!

*Dear brothers and sisters, these are the first words spoken by the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for God's flock. I would like this greeting of peace to resound in your hearts, in your families, among all people, wherever they may be, in every nation and throughout the world. Peace be with you!*

*It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. A peace that comes from God, the God who loves us all, unconditionally.*

*We can still hear the faint yet ever courageous voice of Pope Francis as he blessed Rome, the Pope who blessed Rome, who gave his blessing to the world, the whole world, on the morning of Easter. Allow me to extend that same blessing: God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! All of us are in God's hands. So, let us move forward, without fear, together, hand in hand with God and with one another other! We are followers of Christ. Christ goes before us. The world needs his*

*light. Humanity needs him as the bridge that can lead us to God and his love. Help us, one and all, to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace. Thank you, Pope Francis!*

*I also thank my brother Cardinals, who have chosen me to be the Successor of Peter and to walk together with you as a Church, united, ever pursuing peace and justice, ever seeking to act as men and women faithful to Jesus Christ,*



*in order to proclaim the Gospel without fear, to be missionaries.*

*I am an Augustinian, a son of Saint Augustine, who once said, "With you I am a Christian, and for you I am a bishop." In this sense, all of us can journey together toward the homeland that God has prepared for us.*

*A special greeting to the Church of Rome! Together, we must look for ways to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and encourages dialogue, a Church ever open to welcoming, like this Square with its open arms, all those who are in need of our*

*charity, our presence, our readiness to dialogue and our love.*

*And if you also allow me a brief word, a greeting to everyone and in particular to my beloved Diocese of Chiclayo, in Peru, where a faithful people has accompanied its Bishop, shared its faith and given so much, so much, to continue being a faithful Church of Jesus Christ.*

*To all of you, brothers and sisters in Rome, in Italy, throughout the world: we want to be a synodal Church, a Church that moves forward, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close above all to those who are suffering.*

*Today is the day of the Prayer of Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii. Our Mother Mary always wants to walk at our side, to remain close to us, to help us with her intercession and her love. So, I would like to pray together with you. Let us pray together for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world, and let us ask Mary, our Mother, for this special grace:*

*Hail Mary... [accompanied by the crowds in St Peter's Square and around the world.]*

Source taken from Vatican News;

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/pope-leo-xvi-peace-be-with-you-first-words.html>



## *The grace of February 3rd is still alive*



In this Jubilee Year - a year of special grace for me - I was given the opportunity to experience a sabbatical time in Spain for a few months.

I spent both the Day of Consecrated Life and February 3 in Valencia, Spain. As in every diocese, people of consecrated life in various vocations and ministries gathered with their Bishop Enrique Ramón Casas on February 2 to thank God for the gift of His special election. We first gathered at the Church of St.Catalina (St.Catherine) for a special Liturgy of the Word, and then walked in procession to the Cathedral with candles and singing animated by Dominicans and Carmelites. I found the experience of respect shown by the people quite amazing: they stood still, stopped talking, put down their phones - and we should add that this was a centre with cafes and souvenir stores full of people on a Sunday afternoon. After about 20 minutes we arrived at the Cathedral, to participate in the solemn Eucharist there. According to Christian tradition it is here, in this Cathedral, that the Holy Grail or Chalice is located, which is believed to have been used by Jesus during the Last Supper (I encourage you to explore the subject in person, as the story is quite long).



In connection with the anniversary of the February 3 Eucharistic Miracle, we, as Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, were invited to the College of Our Lady of Loreto (a school for children from 3 to 18 years old) for a special Adoration. This is a school with more than a century of tradition founded by our Sisters, where, although the Sisters have unfortunately been gone for a dozen years, the Holy Family spirit is firmly entrenched. Among the teachers and staff are some Lay Associates (as in Skierniewice Kindergarten in Poland); you can see in the corridor a statue of the Mediatrix of All Graces or pictures of the Good Father. On occasions such as the current one, students also prepare special decorations in the corridors.

In the silence of the school's chapel (although there were several hundred students there), kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, I felt the extraordinary closeness of Jesus. The awareness that two hundred years later He is coming to us again - to the Sisters and to the children - deepened my gratitude. Reflecting on that Miracle, I thought of the mystery of the Eucharist and the presence of Jesus in our lives. Each Adoration - three rounds of about 10

classes each - was preceded by a story to the children about what exactly happened in Bordeaux on February 3, 1822. There was also a special decoration at the altar with a bust of PBN, photos of students and Sisters from Bordeaux, and beautiful guidance for the children on how to personally pray during Adoration (depending on age).

I was impressed by many elements, but two moved me deeply. One - how the children entered and left the chapel in silence kneeling down on one knee, and the teachers also reinforced this with their attitude. And the other moment - when the children were leaving the chapel, one girl separated unnoticed from the group and walked up to the bust of the Founder and touched it. When the teacher approached to take the girl away, the little girl refused to leave. After talking for a while the girl finally obediently joined the group. I asked myself whether in me too there is such a desire to be close to the Servant of God Fr. Pierre Bienvenu Noailles.

May God be thanked, for the graces he continues to give me....

**Sr. Ewa Różycka**  
Poland

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## *A picture speaks beyond words*

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When I received this picture, something stirred within me. It put **'word, gesture, face...'** to the welcome, 'as affectionate Sisters' (PBN).

The circumstance, part of what we are living in the Unit of Spain, refers to actions taken based on the reality of the decrease in the number of Sisters. In our 2022 Assembly the steps to be taken included **'to promote participation... in decision making...with the Provincial Council.'**

This process took discernment, time, meetings, etc. and we came to the decision to close one of the nursing communities, which we maintained for Sisters who needed more attention and care. The three remaining care homes could receive those Sisters.

Setting the process in motion was a complex business, generating at the same time a deep feeling of gratitude on my part. This feeling is expressed

and re-awakened in me by the attached photo.

The attention and care which



accompanied the preparation for the departures, and the welcome in the receiving communities, has greatly helped this delicate and sensitive process. Whether it meant experiencing the welcome in the communities to which they are sent – communities which already have many Sisters in various levels of fragility, or

receiving **"new"** Sisters who, in the majority of cases, are in advanced states of fragility and weakness, I can only say that it is admirable. This speaks to me of the Holy Family sisterly love that the Good Father dreamed of, that is our own dream, the dream we want to share with the whole of humanity.

**'A picture says more than a thousand words'.** We can see that communion is possible among us, that welcoming the weakest is a reality, that walking in hope opens paths for us... And we can believe that humanity is enriched by what we live and announce with our lives in a way that, though hidden, radiates outwards in mysterious ways.

**The Lord is alive ! Let us celebrate. 'My love and my hope is risen'.**

**Sr. Sabina Riaño**  
**Spain**

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## *A New path for Holy Family Communication*

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During the last weekend of April and the first week end of May, we brought together members of the **Communication teams of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles from all over the world via Zoom.**

The aim of this meeting, organised by the International Communications Team, was to reflect on new forms of communication, the importance of knowing our environment and the various tools that can help us to improve it, and to be more

effective in communicating as a charismatic family in today's world.

We also had two other important objectives: to create a set of guidelines that could help the worldwide communication teams, with clear and common lines of action. We also want to create a space for dialogue with our young Holy Family members, in which they can tell us about their experience as part of this great Family and how they believe that we should communicate

our being a Family to each other and to the world.

During these meetings, we heard from **Father José Enrique, a Claretian**, who is a member of his congregation's International Communication Team. He helped us to get a general overview of new tools for communication, especially artificial intelligence and its application to our communication, and also helped us to work towards achieving a general orientation for communication as a family, always



keeping our identity and the charism, the mission and the family as defining elements.

From this work and from the pooling of all our teams, we can draw a number of lines, with the image of the tree that the **Good Father used as a guiding thread**. We can see that any orientation must come from the heart of our being, rooted in values as a Family, which impels us in new ways to accept the call to manifest to the world the presence of God in every human life and in every corner of creation, always with our eyes on the model of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the first Christian communities, and always attentive to our style, a communication based on closeness, in a tone that is friendly, elegant, hopeful, gentle, respectful and always compassionate.

On the last day, four groups of



young people from Spain, Sri Lanka, Peru and Lesotho joined us to hear the life of our Founder as a young person compared with the situation of young people today. Each of the four countries presented their experiences within the Family and made suggestions on how they see communication at this time. I think it was an invaluable experience for the young people to be able to listen to others like them, who come from other places and

cultures, but also experience the charism and values of the **Holy Family of Bordeaux, discovering how, despite our differences, we are all together, with one heart.**

This experience that we have lived, we are sure, opens the door to a new way of understanding communication, of working to generate our own form and style of presenting our charism to the world, with new formats, new channels, but always with authenticity.

**Luis Jesús García-Lomas**  
International Information/Communication Team

## *Holy Family Youth in Mission: Empowering the Disadvantaged*

In order to build communion with the homeless around us, on 2 March last, 10 members of the Holy Family Youth with Sr. Francina Iruthayanathan and Sr. Doreen Philippiah went to Mother Teresa's house in Montreal. There, we prepared a delicious spaghetti bolognese. And we joined the homeless. There were about thirty of them.

We prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and took part in the Eucharistic Celebration with them. We prayed that the Lord would give us the courage to transform their situation into a better life. We served them the spaghetti that we had prepared with so much love. It was an opportunity for us to talk to them, to sing and dance, while also



enjoying some delicious cakes with them. We did our best to make them happy. It was a different and joyful experience for us. Here are a few testimonials:

**Aileen Jency Gunaseelan:** It was humbling to see the resilience of those who struggle and to be reminded of Jesus' call to love and serve others. Through this experience, we shared God's grace with those who needed it most. It was a powerful reminder that every act of kindness reflects God's love in the world.

**Konston Sinthathurai:** I really enjoyed the experience with the homeless that day, from the beginning to the end. It was such a blessing for me and my friends to help those in need with the guidance of the Holy Family Sisters. I really enjoyed what we did, especially the singing and dancing. It reminded me that there is always hope that we can find God even in desperate situations. I thank God for this experience and hope I can help others find their way to God.

Holy Family Youth had organised a theatre show in their parish to raise awareness of the lives of the homeless and to raise the funds needed to offer this fraternal meal to the homeless.

**Holy Family Youth  
Montreal, Canada**

## Children's Easter Celebration

With much joy we have prepared ourselves to celebrate 'Pascua Mita', children's Easter in the Parish San Lorenzo de Nemby, on the 17th, 18th and 19th of April, with the motto 'We walk with Jesus with Hope'. With all the children, teenagers and parents we celebrated Palm Sunday with praise and songs. It was very meaningful because the children with their voices sang praise, praise the Lord..., with these we started our Holy Week.



*help others.*

*Help us to be good friends and to make friends for Jesus, To forgive and to be kind, as you did Thank you for being with us always. Amen.*

The big day arrived for the children, very early they arrived with their smiles and mischief to live Easter, each child was welcomed and given their instincts of their communities, the missionary children and adolescents are distributed by communities, according to their ages.

We began with the prayer led by the adolescents of the community of Santa Teresita. We share the prayer of the children.

*Dear Jesus, My friend and saviour  
We began this meeting with the desire to know  
you more and more and to increase my  
experience with you.  
Thank you for the gift of your love, and for  
Teaching us to love one another,  
We thank you for giving us your body and blood  
in bread and wine,  
And for showing us how we are to serve and*

We continued on Good Friday, walking with Jesus to Calvary, the Way of the Cross presented by the children and accompanied by their parents. In their prayers they repeated 'Thank you that you love us so much that you gave your life for us on the cross. Today we remember the great sacrifice you made for all of us so that we can live in your love. We ask you to help us to be good, to forgive as you did and to follow your example of love and kindness. Above all we pray for so many abandoned children, in the places of war, the dead children, the children of separated parents, and so on and so forth.

We thank you for the gift of life and for your great love. May your peace fill our hearts and guide us always'.

On Holy Saturday we hope with Mary that Jesus will rise again. We prayed the Missionary Rosary,

keeping in mind all the continents, and we ended by praising and thanking God for allowing us to live these unforgettable days.

The faith of these children and adolescents motivates us to continue accompanying them.

Happy Easter...CHRIST IS ALIVE!

Sr. Ramona Chappe  
Paraguay

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## *Eucharistic Easter*

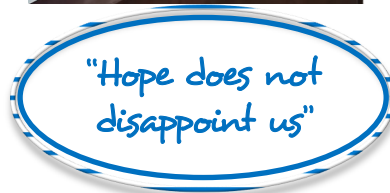
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Easter is the joyful celebration of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection - a sacred remembrance of the Paschal mystery. It is a journey from the washing of the feet to the empty tomb, from the Eucharist of the Towel to the Eucharist of the Table. In this great mystery, Christ gives Himself fully to humanity, offering us eternal presence and communion through the Eucharist. He invites us: ***"Do this in memory of me,"*** leading us from Calvary to the Resurrection, and filling us with hope in His second coming.

This is truly a season of hope - a light that dispels darkness, bringing liberation and new life to the world. As part of my pastoral ministry, I am also entrusted with bringing the Eucharistic Lord to the sick. In this humble task, I collaborate with the Basic Christian Community (Anbiam/BCC) to reach out to the poor and the suffering. Together, we pray, share the Word of God, and offer the healing presence of Christ.

I would like to share a moving personal experience. One day, I visited a sick man who, sadly, had refused to receive Holy Communion. Yet Easter teaches us never to lose hope, even in moments of rejection.

It became a moment of intercession - a call to pray that this soul might one day receive the Eucharistic Lord with dignity and joy. I shared this concern with the Sisters, and we decided to offer the Sacrament of the Sick, hoping the Spirit would strengthen the man to open his heart.



Sometime later, while passing by his home, I paused to pray for him and decided to ask again whether he was now ready to receive Communion. To my great joy and surprise, he said yes. I felt deeply touched by the Lord's grace. I

was witnessing an answer to prayer, a soul drawing closer to God. I trusted that this encounter with the Eucharist would bring healing and salvation to him.

This became my Easter celebration - a moment where I saw faith bearing fruit. Together with the BCC leader and the family, we organized a prayer service, followed by the celebration of Communion. **I could sense the inner effort this man had made to say "Yes" to the Lord.** It was a profound moment of grace - a clear sign of how God works in the heart of each person. I was humbled and grateful to be a co-worker in the vineyard of the Lord, and I promised to return regularly.

This encounter brought to mind the words of Scripture: ***"Hope does not disappoint us"*** (Romans 5:5). This Easter not only brought new life to this sick man but renewed hope in my own ministry. It changed how I view my pastoral mission - infusing me with fresh strength to continue, even in discouraging moments. This, for me, is the pilgrim journey of faith and hope in the indwelling Spirit. We are called to be bearers of hope, encouraging others to embrace difficult missions with trust in God's providence and mercy.



Let us pray for all Eucharistic Ministers - that they may be filled with love, mercy, and compassion. May they become Eucharistic Towels through their self-giving service and invite

others to share at the Eucharistic Table. In our ministry, may we truly become Pilgrims of Hope.

Sr. Jansi Francis  
Chennai, India

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## Daily Resurrection

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The resurrection of Jesus promises that things can always be new again. St. Paul in his letter to the Romans says *"Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life"* (Rom 6.4). In raising Jesus Christ from the dead, the Father has given us new life and a living hope. Pope Francis once said *"the beating heart of the Risen Lord is given to us, and we are asked to give it in turn as a transforming force, as a leaven of a new humanity"*. I am always inspired by the transformation that took place in the disciples of Jesus. In the weeks and months after the Resurrection, they found themselves doing things they could never have imagined. For all the disciples, life would never be the same again. Their encounter with the Risen Christ had changed them forever.

This transformative Journey is always challenging. Living the paschal mystery in our personal lives and in the community requires self-giving, openness to change, letting go of the past and humility. Living in a contemplative community, with the same people, in the same place and doing the same thing over and over again cannot bring any newness unless we encounter the Risen Christ. In our Constitutions, Art. 194, we read *"The Risen Christ is the centre and foundation of our life."* It is this rootedness in the Risen Christ that helps us to live the Paschal Mystery of Christ in our ordinary, everyday life, to see the



Risen Christ in the Sisters and in others with whom we come in contact.

Ronald Rolheiser in his book entitled *"The Passion and The Cross"* says *"Resurrection is not just a question of one day, after death rising from the dead, but it is also about daily rising from the many mini graves within which we so often find ourselves."* Believing in the Resurrection helps us rise from these mini graves keeping us open to surprise, newness and freshness in our lives. We are human and we cannot avoid falling in to discouragement, depression, bitterness and betrayal. Like Jesus we too will have our crucifixions. Yet our faith in the Resurrection invites us precisely to live beyond these. **Let us live the Resurrection in our daily life, the joy, peace and hope of Easter.**

*"The Risen Christ is the centre  
and foundation of our life."*

Contemplative Sisters  
Nagoda, Sri Lanka

## Beating Bitterness as Pilgrims of Hope

I feel moved to share my experience on *"Beating Bitterness as Pilgrims of Hope."* We all encounter unfair situations: people wrong us, we struggle with illness, face spiritual dryness, and endure various crises. While we can't always control what happens to us, we can choose how we respond.

Jesus exemplifies overcoming bitterness through love, forgiveness, and deep reliance on God. He teaches us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us - guiding us to live as true children of God. This profound message is embodied in His life, especially in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, Jesus reveals the power of prayer - as a means of releasing pain, preventing bitterness from taking root, and humbling ourselves in recognition of our need for God's grace.

From these reflections, I am struck by how new melodies arise from the empty tomb, and how the resurrected Jesus overcame bitterness. Even amidst the Pharisees' judgment and hostility, He brought new meaning to the tomb - not as a place to mourn, but to celebrate the glorified victory of life. Through His resurrection, Jesus reveals the journey of faith and the role of hope in overcoming challenges. He calls us to be *Pilgrims of Hope* - a path that demands continual renewal, especially the renewal of our hope in

Christ.

As Pope Francis encourages us to deepen our faith, let us take a gentle pause - as Holy Family women religious - to renew our commitment to this calling. As one family of PBN, we confront the bitter truths of our existence and ask ourselves a rhetorical question: *"Can we*



*still live out our purpose in the 21st century?"* Living this purpose requires us to cross to the other shore. It calls for personal conviction and the courage to follow Jesus with unwavering faith. Strong conviction means confronting and overcoming the bitterness that can poison every aspect of our lives - our attitudes, relationships, and perspectives. Bitterness darkens our outlook, making it easier to view the world through a lens of negativity. But we must let it go. God sees what has happened. He knows what was unfair, who left us behind, and how to restore and uplift us. He knows how to bring us out stronger and better.

Recognizing the urgency of transforming the bitterness within and renewing our sense of purpose, the Jaffna Province organized a *Mega Exhibition* on March 29th. This event aimed to rekindle our awareness of the deep treasures that unite us as one large family. It was more than just an exhibition-it was a celebration. A collective washing away of bitterness. A moment of oneness as we shared the pearls of our stories and spiritual treasures. It also embodied the dream envisioned by our Founder. Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore beautifully captures this sentiment: *"New melodies break forth from the heart when old words die out on the tongue."* On the day of the exhibition, that truth deeply resonated with us. Sharing in the treasure of joy and experiencing communal unity answered our question about life's purpose and relevance.

Many of our family members had the chance to immerse themselves in the rich story and history we share. We truly experienced His grace and glory as five vocations came together in harmony-celebrating the dream of our Founder and singing *"Glory to God Alone."* This moment deeply moved me. I could feel the breaking of new melodies in my heart, transforming bitterness into a song of hope and joy.

Sr. Eugene Barthelot  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka

## *International Women's Day*

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a special event was organized at our school with the collaboration of the Holy Family Sisters. Women from different walks of life shared their life experiences, challenges, and achievements giving young girls an opportunity to learn how courage, education, and hard work can transform our lives.

We started the program at 5.00pm with an inspiring prayer service led by Sr. Robina and one of our ladies named Grace. The Candle was lit by 4 ladies along with Sr. Angelina to indicate that Jesus is present among us and he is the light of the world.

Introduction was given by Miss Shaila emphasizing the occasion for celebrating this day. The Nursery teachers welcomed the group of ladies and girls in the form of an action song where they illustrate that women are not

weaker but equal to men in many ways.

Sr. Raza and Miss Saima divided the ladies into four Groups and the Girls into two groups. They were given different questions for discussions and exchange of ideas.

They were engaged in thoughtful debates and conversations, and later, each group presented their ideas and findings, creating a powerful learning experience for all.

**Portraying Women's Struggles through Art:** The event also featured tableaux depicting the struggles, sacrifices, and successes of women. These performances were not only emotional but also conveyed a strong message that women's strength and resilience cannot be ignored.

**Child Marriage – A Serious Issue:** The event also highlighted the harmful effects of early marriage. In today's world,



many young girls make hasty decisions about marriage, which affects their education and future prospects, often leading to hardships.

**Education first, marriage later:** Make wise decisions, not rushed ones. An Educated girl becomes a strong woman. Education, awareness, and empowerment are the true strength.

As Holy Family women, we invite all of you to continue to walk together as a family guided by faith, love and the shared mission of uplifting one another in the service of God's creation.

**Kohat Community  
Pakistan**

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## *Thoughts on Radical Welcome: Towards Intercultural Living*

What seems important to me: preparing together, the whole community.

- ☞ A radical welcome, with open hearts.
- ☞ This requires us to go through a process of conversion, which is not something that can be acquired once and for all, but which must be constantly reviewed and readjusted.
- ☞ The intercultural community will be transformed by the contribution of each person's values and talents. This comes at a cost: tolerance, cooperation, a positive outlook
- ☞ Acceptance of not understanding everything, at least, at first... Acceptance of cultural and religious values, taking into account the dual reality of those who welcome and those who are welcomed.

- ☞ Letting go of my prejudices "They say..."
- ☞ Accept the other as a gift: (beware of our racism!)
- ☞ Difference is gradually accepted and valued.
- ☞ Authority does not dominate but respects.
- ☞ Need for training, language learning

For me, this intercultural life is a challenge, requiring a daily conversion, it's never a given for anyone: neither the host nor the guest... There's work to be done... constantly readjusting our life choices, accepting to question ourselves personally and together. But it's worth it, there are so many discoveries to be made!

**Sr. Françoise Vanhoutte - Martillac, France**