

(English translation)

June 1982

## WORD OF LIFE

**"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt. 28:20)**

Jesus is risen. Desiring to speak with his disciples, he summons them to a mountainside and there reveals to them his instructions for the future which will endure until the end of the world. Once again he is surrounded by the Eleven, who fall down in homage before him, now fully aware that he who is in their midst is their Lord, and the Lord of all the earth. He announces that the Father has awarded the Son "full authority in heaven and on earth," including that of coming to judge the world at the end of time.

Jesus then tells the apostles that he is entrusting them with the task of making disciples of all the nations. They are to accomplish this by baptizing them and "teaching them to carry out" all that he has commanded. Baptism alone, in fact, is not enough. It must be lived out in daily life.

However, the enormous undertaking of bringing the light of the Gospel to all nations cannot be a human enterprise. For this reason, Jesus concludes with the words:

**"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Until he returns as judge, Jesus will continue to remain close to his disciples and to sustain them. He will be present not only when they gather around the altar for the Eucharist, but always and everywhere.

A new era, therefore, is opening up for humanity, an era marked by the presence of the Risen Jesus. His presence, which continually gathers people "of all nations" and of every time and place, introducing them into the kingdom of the Father's love, is the reality unifying the world. It is his presence which constitutes the Church in its very essence.

**"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Jesus is called Emmanuel, meaning "God-with-us." Through his resurrection, he truly is with us, close to us all.

And since Jesus lives in our midst, what he said 2,000 years ago is not only to be remembered as splendid words from an outstanding person from the past; they are words that he himself, today, is addressing to me and to you, to each one of us personally.

We are the ones to whom he is bringing comfort and salvation. We are the ones whom he continues to serve — especially if we are poor, or alone, or in difficulty. We are the ones he helps when we fail, whom he encourages in our trials.

**"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Jesus is alive in his Church. But where can we meet him? How can we best find him?

He is right here, next to me, next to you.

We can find him in the poor, in the despised, in the sick, in the little children, in the doubtful, in whomever is deprived of freedom, in the outcast ... He himself said it: "I was hungry and you gave me food ... I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... " (Mt.25:35).

He is present in the community that puts his teachings into practice, even if it is a tiny community

— like a family, a group of friends, or a team of co-workers. Two or three persons united in his name is all that is necessary.

He is present when, united and in harmony, we pray together. And it is his presence which causes our prayer to be heard.

Furthermore, he manifests his presence by giving help and support to those who proclaim him to others. And this includes all us, called to bear witness to him.

He is "visible," so to say, in those who have been chosen to be his ministers.

And finally, as you know, he is present all over the world in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

What more could we desire?

Let us learn, during this month, to discover him there where he is. Let us allow him to speak his divine words to us. Let us allow him to give us his powerful help.

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