

(English translation)

Mollens, 27 March 2002

Interview for the transmission Ecclesia-CEI

(By Rita Salerno)

1) Good Friday: the passion and death of Jesus. What is the lesson that Christ offers to us all?

Jesus suffered and died for the salvation and redemption of every person. By doing so, it seems to me that he gave the world a magisterial lesson of what counts: love. It is true love that He brought on earth: a universal love because it asks us to love everyone, even our enemies; it is a love that always takes the initiative: He loved us even when we were still sinners and therefore, were not lovable. It is a love that is concrete because He really took on all our sins.

“Jesus crucified is the Super-love.” This is what an intellectual Buddhist said when he had the grace to get to know him, and it seems to me that with this he said everything.

2) In the *Novo Millennium Ineunte* the Pope speaks of a “spirituality of communion.” What is the secret to live and cultivate it concretely?

The secret to living the “spirituality of communion,” which the Holy Father John Paul II speaks about in the *Novo Millennium Ineunte*, lies in Jesus crucified and forsaken, whom he describes under the title “A face of sorrow.”

Through the “spirituality of communion” – the name also states it – we can bring about communion, the unity of people with God and with each other.

Now the model to fulfil this is really Jesus on the cross who experienced, for us, separation from the Father, as His cry states: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (*Mt 27:46*). But He also knew how to overcome such an abyss, reuniting Himself to the Father, as His words state: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (*Lk 23:46*).

For this reason, the Pope, in a letter to Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement, affirmed that Jesus forsaken is the “best way” to reach unity, to reach communion.

3) On the basis of your personal experience, where is Jesus crucified and forsaken today, defined by the Pope as the “mystery of mysteries”?

Jesus crucified and forsaken, who assumed with His human nature all our problems, is present in the world wherever there is suffering, division, tensions, terror... sin and also natural disasters.

Jesus forsaken is present in betrayals also ours, of us Catholics; in the still fomenting disunity among Churches; He is present in the fragmentation of different faiths, also in atheism, secularism and materialism.

He is also present in the underdevelopment that still ravages many parts of the world, as he is present in the earthquake of these days in Afghanistan.

Above all, according to me, He is present in the international terrorism that violently emerged with September 11th. There, “the forces of Evil” are at work par excellence, as the Pope said.

We Christians need to know where He is present so that, with God’s help and all the resources available to us, we can at least remediate some of these evils.

4) Holy Saturday: the Church is already projected towards the resurrection of our Lord. What does this day of expectation and silence suggest to Chiara Lubich?

4) To think of Mary again: of her immense pain in having participated so intimately in the death of her Son, but also to think again of her hope in the resurrection, more than ever alive in her.

Mary is really the icon of the Christian mystery in which cross and resurrection are one thing. And while seeking to share in her suffering, to turn our thoughts to the risen Jesus, grateful, infinitely grateful for all that He means for us and for the whole world, according to our faith; and not lastly, because if He is risen, we too will all rise.

5) What is the wish you would like to extend to all believers for this Easter?

My wish is that we may always truly live the Risen Lord, that is, that we may always go beyond all the difficulties, all the obstacles, to make of every obstacle a springboard so as to live with the Risen Lord. May He pour into our hearts the gifts of the Holy Spirit: joy and peace. In this way we will live a wonderful Easter.