

XXII International Seminar - Parish Cells System of Evangelization

Teaching of Don PiGi for the cell meeting

“Have Courage, do not fear.

Dearest Brothers and Sisters, praised be Jesus Christ.

I take advantage of this occasion to greet each one of you and all the guests present in your cells; embrace them with love, applaud them, make them feel truly our brothers and sisters, because that is what they are and that is the reason they have come among us, to share the joy of being evangelizers.

And precisely because joy is the characteristic of this meeting of ours, I invite you first to listen to the passage of the Word of God that has been given to us; from St. Matthew's Gospel, 28,1-10:

“After the Sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it.

His face was like lightening, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke, and he said to the women, there is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified; he is not here, for he has risen as he said he would. Come and see the place where He lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples. He has risen from the dead, and now He is going ahead of you to Galilee, that is where you will see Him.”

Jesus is saying the same thing to us too: **Do not be afraid, but tell your brothers**; the first mandate, the one entrusted to the women, which proceeds that entrusted to the apostles immediately before the Ascension of Jesus into heaven, was entrusted to simple people, simple and a little fearful, as in fact these women were.

The risen Jesus repeats that we must not be afraid of becoming messengers of the announcement of His resurrection, because a person who meets the risen Jesus and docilely entrusts to Him has nothing to fear. This is the message that Christians are called on to diffuse even to the ends of the earth.

Note it well, this is our commitment *“Go out into the world and announce the Gospel, that is the good news to all men”* It is a revolution in words.

Because, when we talk among ourselves, very often, we end up talking about difficult and painful experiences. Jesus, instead, gives us a very deep positive proposal, that touches our most intimate personal feelings. **We must announce to everyone that Jesus is Risen.**

So the apostles, says the Gospel, set out on exhausting journeys, they went far and wide to announce that Jesus was the Lord and that He had died for the salvation of humanity. The Gospel says it repeatedly, but even the soldiers who were guarding the tomb were shaken with fear, afraid of confronting a new situation....**FEAR**; they were afraid of the angel who had appeared in shining garments and who rolled away the stone. For us today, the Risen Christ repeats what He said to the women, who had remained close to Jesus during the Passion – **NOT TO BE AFRAID**, to become thy messengers of the announcement of His Resurrection.

Dearest Brothers and Sisters, he who meets the Risen Christ and docilely entrusts himself to Him has nothing to fear.

You must understand: **the important thing is to really meet Jesus risen from the dead.**

And so many of us, I would say all of us, can say that we have had the joy of meeting Jesus risen, and again and again, we have felt the sensation of this meeting as gradually Jesus entered into our lives, took possession, moved an object, an event, a person who caused fear, and filled us with joy. As gradually His person became so loveable so as to be the one deep, overwhelming love of our life.

Perhaps, however, we did not always have the courage to follow Him: yes, because you see, what actually blocks the Mandate, is not only our internal situation, it is something deep within, in the heart of man; it is fear that emerges and suffocates the joy. It is, not feeling ready to make the announcement.

John Paul said in an even stronger way: The Church is in debt to the world for this announcement: God loves you, individually and personally. Christian faith begins not by accepting a doctrine, but through a life giving MEETING with a person, with the risen Jesus.

Dear friends, in our daily existence, there are so many opportunities to communicate our faith to others in a simple but convincing way, and it is extremely urgent that men and women of our time can know and meet Jesus, and thanks to our example, let themselves be won over by Him.

It works by word of mouth. We should not remain in our intimate feelings, and we are quite satisfied with this intimacy with Him, excluding others: we have a duty to make others conscious of this reality of the meeting with Christ, which changes our hearts and leads us to become evangelizers.

Yes, then, **Evangelization starts from the encounter with Christ:** and this is a meeting of joy, of great joy. It is the joy of Christ's Easter, His Resurrection ...

It is a renewing joy that also embraces the time of Pentecost.

And it is the joy of Mary, the mother of Christ. The Gospel says almost nothing about Mary, but Christian tradition, rightly likes to contemplate her, while she rejoices with Jesus's friends who formed the new-born Church, and it is to her, mother of the Church, and star of evangelization, that we pray, to keep alive in each one of us the faith in the Resurrection and to make us witnesses of this hope that radically changes and illuminates our life. The overwhelming announcement "**Christ is truly risen from the dead**" resounds in our families, resounds in our community, and in all other communities that your guests represent: It is a joy that will give meaning **to our future** as Christians, open to the marvellous time when God, even thanks to our efforts, can reign in a world reborn and risen again with Christ.

Praise be Jesus Christ.