

We Are Resurrection

This reflection is inspired by the editorial that Mr. M. Stéfán Thériault, Director of the Le Pèlerin centre, revolving around Saint Joseph Oratory, published in the monthly newsletter, *Pèlerin en bref*, last April. About the scene of the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn 11, 1-43), he was wondering what is the most surprising: (1) to see a man back from the dead, coming out of his tomb at the call of Christ (“Lazare, come outside!”) or (2) the response of men and women who roll the stone in front of the tomb, again at the call of Jesus (“Remove the stone!”).

What is greater, to see a man accept to come out of his tomb, of the death that encloses him, or to witness men and women who help this man to leave? The resurrection, in its deepest essence, refers to both.

Like Marthe, before the possibility of rolling the stone, we tend to reply "Lord, it smells already: it is the fourth day." We do not like to smell the death of the other and what it contains in fragilities, wounds, fears, anguish, etc., because we do not like to feel our own death. Is it not easier to leave the other in his tomb instead of him to be born, to maintain us in our own death?

Of course, the stone that we are called to roll is made of our judgments, accusations, clericalisms, the stiffness or softness or our own identity, as it is made of all our persecutions and our claims to save. The resurrection is the miracle of rolling the stone that exists between us and the other, preventing the other to live, to be born-from-Above.

Why should we focus on our fears, our anguish and our wounds? As if they were the centre of our universe, the substance of our life or the fabric of our existence. (...)The urgent call of the resurrection is refusing to believe that our being is a tomb where death is victorious and daring to come into the light, and in doing so, looking at the empty tomb and wondering that we were able to believe and live for so many years in death... empty. The evil to which we devote our lives is empty and it brings nothing, creates nothing.

To be able to come back to light after death, he who is prisoner of a tomb must make an effort, mobilizing interior resources, finding strength once again, but also needing that someone shows him the light, enticing him to go back to the light, showing him interest, reaching out to him, fetching him deep inside the tomb. That is where we, Vincentians, are resurrection.

If no one comes to roll the stone, the destitute might very well remain locked into their suffering, their misery, their fears, their anguish, their deaths, their griefs, their rancor, their addictions, their blockages. Not seeing anything in the darkness, feeling alone and abandoned, they will remain prostrate, withdrawn, and therefore unable to revive. To get back on their feet, they need a joint effort – bouncing back in confidence and – removing obstacles towards life, both in response to the divine will.

Exactly the mission of the SSVP: to go to the poor to help them overcome obstacles to a better life. Support people who experience difficulties (material, psychological or physical, one is often the consequence of the other), the excluded, those considered as “already smelling bad”. Welcoming them with respect, warmth, empathy, without prejudice or a priori. Even though the means are limited, giving them tangible assistance with a smile, showing interest in their fate and what they are going through, although it may be dark. By opening our hearts, yes, we do roll their stone a little bit on the side, giving way to a ray of light and enticing them to get up and walk.

"Come outside" is there for us when we remove the stone for the other, and when we let the O(o)ther's sun rise "within" us.

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