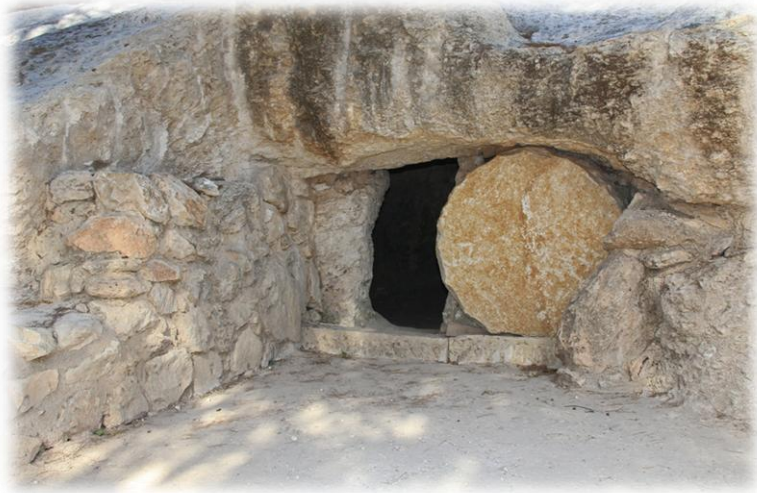


Dear friends,

Heartfelt Easter greetings to all. A greeting that is also a prayer, imploring that the Risen Lord's words to Mary Magdalene can come to life among us, especially during this time of grace, of jubilee for our Covenant Family and of renewal for our Church.



Rejoice and do not be afraid...these are Jesus' invitations during his first encounter with Mary Magdalene after his resurrection and at the empty tomb. Two invitations that show us how the Lord knows our heart.

Joy that can only be born in a heart that is grateful for all the gifts it has received, has been blessed because its deepest and most honest desires have been realized. The regret and fear that come before death, our death, the consequence of man's failure in the face of the temptation of sin, have been conquered. And this regret and this fear were also present in the hearts of Jesus' friends. When the Lord was crucified, buried, and a stone sealed his tomb, guarded by a group of soldiers, it seemed as if sin had won, together with the hope that Jesus of Nazareth had awakened in so many people of good will. His project, to all intents and purposes, had failed. All that was left was to give him a dignified ending, cry their regrets, mourn in silence. This is why Mary went to the tomb.

But the stone has been rolled back and the guards have disappeared. Although Mary Magdalene was afraid and disconcerted to see the empty tomb, thinking that that they had stolen the body, her meeting with the Resurrected Christ, whom she initially failed to recognize, awakens the understanding of what He had said, that the victory of Love would emerge from the same tomb, from the "place of the dead." Rejoice that he rises from your tomb, that from now on, the tomb "is empty."

What seems to be a failure, a sign of weakness, is the sign of victory and the start of the path of renewal. In his Lenten message this year, our Holy Father Francis speaks about the poverty of the Son of God as the way of redemption and the way for the Church. A redemption that begins with renouncing his divinity to become

man through Mary's 'yes', that young woman from Nazareth who was considered to be socially poor for living on Israel's periphery. The same path of renewal that the Church begins with an act of apparent weakness, such as Pope Benedict's surprising decision to step down, which was questioned by so many people.

Mary, like the Church, is given the task to go and tell the others what she has seen and experienced. And he asks her not to be afraid.

Not of Jesus' "friends," because it will not be easy to make them understand and believe. Sometimes it is easier and more comfortable to sit with our regret, licking our wounds, than to live from faith and trust in the Resurrected Christ. Not of those who killed him, buried him and wanted to make sure that this hope would not leave the tomb so that they could continue with their designs. Many things resist God's wishes and his victory in a world where we build our own idols, our false securities. We can overcome this fear that arises within us in the face of conversion, resistance and external counterattacks, with Him who overcame sin and its consequences, the love of Christ in us. As Pope Francis reminds us, for some faith ends with Good Friday and they do not arrive at Glory Sunday. At best, they rejoice in God's generous love, but they do not allow him to be fruitful in them.

This love that fills us with true joy and overcomes death and fear, this love that makes us celebrate these days of Easter is a love that becomes real and concrete when it experiences the Father's mercy through Jesus, as solidarity in brotherly service.

There are so many spaces and places within the Church and the Schoenstatt Family where this is a reality that moves and generates hope beyond itself. That allow us to say that the Lord's Easter continues to be a reality, a source of the fullness of life.

It is also beautiful to see that the Schoenstatt.org team, and with all of its limitations, lives the Covenant as a school of mercy and solidarity by praying and offering themselves for others, working one for and with others at the service of all, responding with simplicity and trust to the Holy Father's request to accompany him in his service as our Shepherd, sealing a covenant of solidarity with him; to see how a group of people strive in the Covenant to build 100 solidarity houses for the centenary of our Solidarity House, which is our original shrine.

"No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others" (Pope Francis). "So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes and sigh continually, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great" (Saint John Chrysostom). If the Covenant of Love gives birth to culture, covenant culture, it is because loving solidarity lies at its centre.

Jubilee 2014 is Easter for Schoenstatt; the Covenant of Love is victorious; there are no stones or guards that can shut it out, the periphery is its vocation. The young sodalists went out inspired by the faith of our father and founder, joyful and without fear, to live their Covenant on the battle front, in the trenches, where they

lived from this love that conquers, a welcoming and transforming mercy, missionary solidarity for all those who go to the shrine to experience it from Mary's maternal heart.

On this Easter of resurrection, the stone, the denial of all promises has been rolled away, the guards, despite having been bribed to tell the official version of events, also disappeared and what remains is the reality that the Lord has conquered death, and with it the constant invitation to joy and to go out without fear to proclaim him. Love always conquers sin and the Covenant of Love is the School of Mary on this path to holiness.

Happy Easter of the Resurrection!

Your Fr. José María