



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Saint Peter's Square

Wednesday, 4 December 2013

Video

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today I wish to return to the affirmation “I believe in the resurrection of the body”. This is not a simple truth and it is anything but obvious; living immersed in this world it is not easy for us to fathom a future reality. But the Gospel enlightens us: our resurrection is strictly bound to Jesus’ Resurrection. The fact that he is risen is the proof that there is a resurrection of the dead. I would like to present several aspects regarding the relation between the Resurrection of Christ and our resurrection. He is risen, and because he rose, we too will be raised.

First, Sacred Scripture itself contains *a path towards full faith in the resurrection of the dead*. This is expressed as faith in God as creator of the whole man, soul and body, and as faith in God the Liberator, the God who is faithful to the covenant with his people. The Prophet Ezekiel, in a vision, contemplates the graves of the exiled which are reopened and whose dry bones come back to life thanks to the breath of a living spirit. This vision expresses hope in the future “resurrection of Israel”, that is, the rebirth of a people defeated and humiliated (cf. Ez 37:1-14).

Jesus, in the New Testament, brings to fulfilment this revelation, and ties faith in the resurrection to his own person and says: “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25). It will be our Lord Jesus who on the last day raises those who have believed in him. Jesus has come among us, he became man like us in all things, except sin; in this way he took us with him on his return journey to the Father. He, the Word Incarnate, who died for us and rose again, gives to his disciples the Holy Spirit as a pledge of full communion in his glorious Kingdom, which we vigilantly await. This

waiting is the source and reason for our hope: a hope that, if cultivated and guarded — our hope, if we cultivate and guard it — becomes a light that illumines our common history. Let us remember it always: we are disciples of the One who came, who comes everyday and who will come at the end. If we can manage to be more aware of this reality, we will be less fatigued by daily life, less prisoners of the ephemeral and more disposed to walk with a merciful heart on the way of salvation.

Another aspect: *What does it mean to rise again?* The resurrection of us all will take place on the last day, at the end of the world, through the omnipotence of God, who will return life to our bodies by reuniting them to our souls, through the power of Jesus' Resurrection. This is the fundamental explanation: because Jesus rose we will rise; we have the hope of resurrection because he has opened to us the door of resurrection. And this transformation, this transfiguration of our bodies is prepared for in this life by our relationship with Jesus, in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. We, who are nourished in this life by his Body and by his Blood shall rise again like him, with him and through him. As Jesus rose with his own body but did not return to this earthly life, so we will be raised again with our own bodies which will be transfigured into glorified bodies. This is not a lie! This is true. We believe that Jesus is Risen, that Jesus is living at this moment. But do you believe that Jesus is alive? And if Jesus is alive, do you think that he will let us die and not make us rise? No! He is waiting for us, and because He is risen, the power of his resurrection will raise us all.

A last element: *already in this life we have within us a participation in the Resurrection of Christ.* If it is true that Jesus will raise us at the end of time, it is also true that, in a certain way, with him we have already risen. Eternal life has already begun in this moment, it begins during our lifetime, which is oriented to that moment of final resurrection. And we are already raised, in fact, through Baptism; we are inserted in the death and resurrection of Christ and we participate in the new life, in his life. Therefore, as we await the last day, we have within us a seed of resurrection, as an anticipation of the full resurrection which we shall receive as an inheritance. For this reason too, the body of each one of us is an echo of eternity, thus it should always be respected; and in particular, the life of those who suffer should be respected and loved, that they may feel the closeness of the Kingdom of God, of that state of eternal life towards which we are journeying. This thought gives us hope: we are walking toward the resurrection. To see Jesus, to encounter Jesus: this is our joy! We will all be together — not here in the Square, or elsewhere — joyful with Jesus. This is our destiny!

To special groups

I offer an affectionate greeting to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Audience, including those from England, Denmark, Australia and the United States. Upon you and your families I invoke God's blessings of joy and peace!

I extend an affectionate thought to *young people*, the *sick* and *newlyweds*. Yesterday we celebrated the memorial of St Francis Xavier, Patron of Missionaries. This holy priest reminds us of the duty of each to proclaim the Gospel. Dear *young people*, be courageous witnesses of your faith; dear *sick people*, offer your daily cross for the conversion of those far from the light of the Gospel; and you, dear *newlyweds*, be proclaimers of the love of Christ beginning in your family.

Now, I invite everyone to pray for the Greek-Orthodox nuns of St Tecla in Maaloula, Syria, who were taken by force two days ago by armed men. Let us pray for these religious, for these sisters, and for all people who have been sequestered because of this ongoing conflict. Let us continue to pray and to work together for peace. Let us pray to Our Lady. (*Hail Mary...*).