



Dearest Sisters and young women in formation,
On the glorious feast of Easter, the *Sequence* proclaims with awe and profound emotion the stupendous news: “Christ my hope is risen!” And we too, at the dawn of a new creation, are witnesses, like Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, to the victory of Life over death.

The silence of the tomb has been broken. Light has shone in the darkness, illuminating every existence and placing it under the sign of the Redemption, of transfiguration, of love.

The resurrection of Christ is the promise and *premise* of liberation from the anguish of death that torments humanity and threatens relationships. Jesus Christ bore in his body and took with him to the tomb all the violence, all the broken communications, all the hate that human beings inflict on one another. And now, risen to life, he brings with him the prisoners of death. He lifts up the fallen and opens new horizons of meaning to all those who continue to believe, hope and love.

From the empty tomb on Easter morning the invitation, “Do not be afraid,” echoes down the centuries until it reaches our contemporary world. *Do not be afraid* because death and life have fought an epic battle and Life has won, indeed, it has triumphed forever. Sisters, this is the message we are called to announce through our *personal and communitarian* experience of resurrection.

If we have risen with Christ, then we must proclaim to everyone that life is stronger than death—a reality to which we witness through our efforts to build fraternal and prophetic communities in which “*we*” prevails over “*me*”: communities in which we give others the precedence; live in an attitude of mutual forgiveness; strive to initiate and maintain dialogue in a spirit of charity; share our faith and hope; behave with compassion toward others, especially the “least ones” and the victims of violence and injustice, and learn to look upon the sufferings of humanity as part of the “labor pains” (Rm. 8:22) that are generating a more beautiful, true and just world.

How can we not grasp the throb of new life in the proud dignity and forward-looking gaze of the Japanese people, whose lives were shattered by a terrible earthquake and further imperiled by the prospect of a nuclear disaster; or in the courageous witness of persecuted Christian minorities; or in the cry of the peoples of Africa and the Mideast for freedom and democracy?

It is in this way that the Resurrection permeates our daily life and produces abundant fruits of life for everyone.

Dear sisters and young women, we just returned from India—a vibrant and fascinating country overflowing with young people and rich in cultures and traditions. The experience of profound communion with our sisters there prompted me to thank the Lord repeatedly for every Daughter of St. Paul, for her desire to do good, for her feeling of belonging to the Congregation and fidelity to it. I am sure that you all accompanied our Visit with your prayers and I thank you very sincerely for this.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your concern and prayers for our sisters in Japan and the Ivory Coast, and for the offerings we have received from you in response to my appeal regarding the publication of the Bible in Malagasy.

May the Lord enable us to be women of communion and hope; women who, in carrying out the apostolate, “trumpet the news of the Resurrection” (Fr. Alberione), proclaiming to everyone: “Yes, we are sure: Christ is truly risen!”

A very Blessed Easter to all of you in the newness of the Risen Christ!

Affectionately,

Sr. M. Antonietta Bruscato
Superior General