

SHORT WRITINGS FROM TAIZÉ
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Brother Luc

Easter Voices

For Charlotte and Martin

“Christ is risen!” That is the very heart of the Christian message.

The stories of Easter tell us how those who were previously most deeply committed to following Jesus discover that he remains present beyond death and that he entrusts to them a huge, new responsibility.

The following free echoes of a few of the witnesses of the Passion and Resurrection are an invitation to let that moment of history come into our own lives and shed its light there.

“Folly to the human mind,” the Resurrection declares that God opens a path through our world. God enables us to know him by means of a communion with him. I can only believe in God, but believing keeps me alive.

Simon the Leper

I nearly died of indignation that day. It was shocking enough that an unknown woman should suddenly come bursting into my house when I was in the middle of a meal with the people I had invited, but then that crazy woman began filling the air with the vapours of something worth a whole year's wages! Rather than wasting it like that, why didn't she just give us the perfume? We could have kept it in reserve for some important occasion.

Of course, our anger concealed our pride and our blindness. We could not help thinking of all the money that was evaporating there. We were still calculating the price of our salvation and we feared being blamed for being poor stewards. Helping the poor, after all, is surely a good deed that will count in our favour on Judgment Day? That woman's freedom amazed us, made us feel more than anxious.

After all, perhaps really we wanted to live as intensely as that woman, to show the same courage. But we were too concerned about ourselves, too afraid of letting ourselves go.

She was showing us Jesus, while we could only see the broken scraps of the vase. Because of him, she broke with convention and declared: "One moment of your life is worth more than all this perfume. I have received much more from you. You have made me realize that life is a gift before it is a struggle. I can give too, and nothing will stop me."

Jesus was soon going to love and give beyond all limits. All the more shocking, then.

If Jesus inspired such daring in that woman, he can perfectly well provoke a similar resolve in each of us. If you want to be freed of fear and anger in order to be able to love like her, you only have to look at him and follow him. You will be disconcerted, shocked. But he will open up a path for you to follow....

Judas

It's done, I have told the leader of the Temple Guard where we'll be spending the night. The arrest can take place discretely. The hour of truth is coming! Then Jesus is going to be forced to reveal himself. This time there will be no putting it off for later.

He has to be recognized first by the top people. He has to accept his responsibilities. It's urgent now, when so many people are tired of waiting, with no sign of anything coming. While the name of God is abused and exploited by unscrupulous people whose only aim is to get rich and stay in power.

After all, the Messiah surely has to free us, restore our nation's dignity and the sanctity of our worship, establish his kingdom? What can be wrong about this manoeuvre, since the goal is worthwhile? It's going to avoid a lot of pain and hasten salvation. I wouldn't want to miss that day!

Actually, I have been feeling increasingly doubtful recently. Jesus has been expressing such gloomy ideas.

This evening, with him going about washing our feet like a servant, I realized there could be no more delay. I'm afraid he'll break down and give up. We can't have him stop fighting when he's so close to the goal. Is he afraid? Is he frightened he might cause a revolt that would leave victims?

He seems a long way from the master who used to teach with such authority, filling the crowds with enthusiasm. If he goes on humbling himself like this, how can he ever hope to be recognized? I did not leave everything in order to end up stuck in a dead end like that.

If he surrenders, he'll be betraying our cause. If he says nothing, he will be taking sides with lies and injustice. If Jesus is the Messiah, he has to show it openly, then everyone will acclaim him. If he's nothing but an imposter, he will have to take responsibility for the failure of his enterprise and the disappointment of all the people he has misled. We have to get things straightened out. I refuse to go on any more without some clear guarantees.

James

I was there when they took him away. A whole group of armed thugs suddenly came looming out of the darkness, with some of the High Priest's soldiers. It was as though they were after some dangerous brigand. If only he had resisted, then we might have reacted... but he went out to meet them, gave himself up. When

we saw he was allowing them to take him away, everything went blurred. We ran away. How did he decide it was the right moment? Where did his resolve come from?

We had just been celebrating the Passover together. He spoke of his imminent death, of being betrayed, and we took no notice. After the psalms, we went out. He wanted to go on praying while we were dog tired.

In the garden on the Mount of Olives we found a quiet place far from the crowds and plotting. Recently there has been more and more tension; they were looking for him. Some even wanted to persuade him not to make the pilgrimage. For our part we didn't want to miss seeing him manifested as the Messiah so, as before, we followed him.

That was where it really got to him. He knew how close the danger was, while we had no idea. Fully conscious, he was anticipating the stripping and the exclusion that were waiting for him.

All his life, he has been fighting a battle against suffering. He denounced fatalism and resignation, reminding people that God did not create evil, does not want anyone to suffer. Instead of running away or playing it safe, he comforted, healed, helped everyone he met. Even when it was a Sabbath, or when people were trying to catch him out. Those asking for help were more important than his own reputation or safety.

He had always been so sure and suddenly we felt that he was vulnerable, defenceless, as if he could no longer see the way ahead. He always used to spend

hours immersed in God, listening closely in order to stay in tune with the Father's will and recognize the way forward. Was he about to give up, convinced that there was no point in going on? He could have avoided the conflict, quitting Jerusalem and heading for the desert. He could simply have waited for things to calm down, then taken advantage of the situation... but he always denounced the voices that keep us prisoners of our fears. If he had fled he would have been alone; he would have denied himself.

He always found rest in God, looking to him, waiting for him. He knew that he was his Father's joy and happiness, that his Father had entrusted everything to him. In return, he gave himself completely.

We had prepared thousands of plans; failure was unbearable. We preferred to keep the image of the unshaken master, a Messiah that suited us. We deserted him, but he was watching over us. Three times he found us asleep. It was our weakness that made him decide. In order to free us from our blindness and the fear that still held us back, he showed that nothing could prevent him from giving himself.

Right to the end, it was he who encouraged us and urged us on. We had no idea that those would be his last moments with us. He let himself be taken in order to send us forward.

Joseph of Arimathea

I was summoned urgently the night Jesus appeared in front of our nation's supreme council. His trial was being improvised amidst a great deal of agitation. The contradiction between the different witnesses made nonsense of the accusation. His innocence was becoming increasingly obvious.

He had not hesitated to denounce the shady business being organized inside the Temple and the exploitation of believers by a ruling caste intent solely on defending its privileges. Some of them feared a rival, others were blinded by envy. His determination and his independence were troubling. Was there not a risk he might stir up the populace and lead them in a revolt? That would have provoked a crack-down that would have ruined long years of delicately run operations. We need to protect the people from their ignorance and passions. Officially speaking, the supreme council only wanted to serve the public good. But we knew that the decision to eliminate him had already been taken. Our leaders were simply trying to legitimate their sentence. Under the pretext of protecting religion from a usurper, they were prepared to sacrifice Truth and the Law. If they feared God they would never have done such a thing. The mock trial of an innocent served to put his accusers in the wrong!

In the midst of the growing chaos and tension, Jesus retained his self-control. His silence showed us that the chief priests were losing all credit. We were all

full of fears and mixed up in our calculations; he was the only one who was truly free.

The High Priest did nothing to minimize the affair; rather he tried to stir things up in order to catch Jesus out. He thought he could make him lose his self-assurance and give up the game. Then, with Jesus' supporters disappointed, the High Priest would have neutralized him and avoided a scandal. But Jesus surprised us. He not only spoke openly about himself but went further than ever, claiming to be "the Son of Man, seated at the right hand of God, coming with the clouds of heaven" to inaugurate the Kingdom of God.

Didn't he realize, or was he speaking out of desperation? It was incredibly daring of him, anyway. Jesus had raised the stakes to a level nobody ever imagined. Now we could see what the issue really was. Now it was a matter of the hope that has kept our people alive through generations!

Each of us was free to take it in their own way. Clearly neither calculating nor ambitious, he alone was worthy of faith. But how could one follow him? If one decided to rely on his words, there would be so many resistances to be overcome. If I do not believe him, he will simply be a pretentious loser. But if I take him seriously, what a strangely paradoxical way of salvation begins to present itself...

The High Priest was scandalized. For him, the only way the Messiah was going to appear was as a glorious victor. An isolated, powerless, silent prisoner could only be a dangerous imposter or some irresponsible fool intent on deceiving the people. He had decided

on the accusation: offence against God. That was enough to win him the votes of the waverers. Anyone who failed to identify those words as blasphemy was showing himself to be a traitor, surely? The High Priest appealed to us all. His question challenged us more than we would have wished: "What Messiah am I waiting for? How will he fulfil his mission to serve God and mankind?" Cowardice left our judgment paralyzed. Jesus alone gave us light; the kindness in his gaze freed us of our complicity and at the same time appealed to our inmost hearts.

He made no attempt to argue, to plead and convince. To the very end he simply offered his peace. Now his judgment is under way. He does not condemn people but delivers them from lies. Yet how can God reveal himself through this innocent victim whom no one recognizes?

Pilate

According to our law, he does not deserve to die. He has committed no crime. I feel no hatred toward him; rather I pity him. Such a mess! He's dying for a quarrel about ideas, the jealousy of fanatics. Suppose he was happy being king of another world? Without soldiers he's not dangerous, but people are so sensitive when it comes to their religion. They want to protect their Temple. There's no room for any competition there. Yet it wasn't worth making such a fuss. Still, Rome

wants peace and I have keep it: no shaking the boat, that's the main thing.

I was prepared to set that mystic free. If only he had helped me a bit! But he remained much too proud in the face of those mad foxes. He ought to have rejected the myth people had built up around him; a mere shrug of the shoulders would have done. Everyone would have realized it was not something worth disturbing me with. But on the contrary he took it all so seriously; he refused to deny the faith a handful of crazy guys had placed in him; instead he made it even more radical.

The chief priests will be less haughty once the people realize they trembled before a poor, defenceless Galilean. Such hypocrites! Look at them, so bothered about purity and holiness, yet getting rid of that troublesome fellow without a moment's hesitation! I was not taken in by their tricks, but the representative of the world's most powerful empire is hardly likely to let himself be impressed by a local prophet and risk being denounced to Caesar.

It's always better to show some firmness and remind people what the price is if they make trouble and challenge our authority. There's nothing better than a good example to quiet things down. It's the method we use everywhere to control barbarians. We pacify and civilize the world on the basis of well-maintained terror.

Simon of Cyrene

At first I wanted to turn aside. All that shouting, the crowd, the soldiers, it surely meant nothing good.... What had happened? And then I recognized him, in the midst of the turmoil, wretched and dignified. A soldier grabbed me. There I was beside him. So I carried the beam he died on.

The heavy cross-piece was crushing my shoulder; amidst all that uproar, my arm had a hard time keeping it in place. The road was a steep climb; I had to concentrate in order not to stumble. How had he come to this? Only a few days ago he was welcomed into Jerusalem amidst cheers. There must have been some people intent on shutting him up. But a religious teacher is neither a political firebrand nor a gang-leader!

The only way of justifying the death sentence was to make him out to be a dangerous enemy and a miserable traitor. Curses and blows rained down on him. The people were like a pack of dogs after their quarry. He was the only human one there.

He climbed on up, fell, went on without protesting, no anger, no panic. He encouraged me.

The crucified criminal

No one will keep a good memory of me. On the contrary, they're all glad to see me go. My companion in misfortune, condemned together with me, is struggling like an animal caught in a snare. He's full of hatred

toward the whole world. He's mocking the Nazarene. But that kind of cynicism can't hide his despair. We reckoned we had all the rights, so it's surely all our own fault if this is where it's brought us.

We wanted to make ourselves the masters of our lives: no law, no God to believe in and account to for things. We thought we were unreachable, all-powerful, when all we did was destroy. We thought that hatred would be our strength, when all it did was isolate us more and more. Evil was playing with us. We've lost and our death is foul. We knew what we were risking, now we have the punishment that haunted us.

If we wanted to come close to others and live a human life, we should have taken the path of patience and gentleness, like Jesus. He comforts his companions and prays for his enemies. Where does he find the strength?

At last I've found someone who's not afraid of me and who is not glad to see me die! He's opened the prison of hatred I was lost in. He understands my appeal and allows my distress to touch him. I matter to him, I am no longer alone. He assures me that my end is not God's punishment for my faults.

He is exhausted, yet stronger than the violence of his tormentors! I shall keep looking at him till the end comes. He gives me peace. I can ask him for anything, give him everything. Even death he welcomes as a gift from God, and God will not refuse it to me either. That will be the way for me to join him again soon in his Kingdom.

The disciple Jesus loved

At the foot of the cross, we are there for him. In the midst of our great pain, refusing what is evil and yet helpless, we are already free.

She who bore him is with him to the end. Delivered now from the labours of a lifetime, faithfully consenting to give every moment of her life to her son to let him fulfil a mission beyond all ambition.

She never let her heart look away from him. She stands there, still consenting, never asking for a moment's rest. Her son welcomes her into true peace, a closeness closer than even the strongest blood-bond.

She is his truest disciple. She first listened to him and followed him. Her whole life's journey has been nothing but a deepening of her initial Yes. She was silent in order to hear none but him, to fill herself with his gifts and expectations. She became his mother a second time by doing his will.

Remaining faithful to Jesus will be a matter of obedience to his word. Just as we are losing him, he leads us to love as he has loved us.

Mary

Soon it will all be over. He has drunk a sip of vinegar. Now he's reached the end; he will soon be delivered. How could I have tried to stop him? Now his hour has come. How could I ever have imagined him like this? But he's showing me the way, isn't he? By offering

himself, seeing nothing, determined, and nobody can guess what is at stake.

Could a mother abandon her son? This is the only place I can be, here, with him. Nothing could ever keep me away, nobody. I'm storing up everything in my heart and the day will come when I'll speak out. He is sustaining me, leading me way beyond anything I could ever have wished. He has not fenced himself in or lost courage. He is paying no attention to the evil that is so intent on overwhelming everything. The provocations, the desertions, nothing could keep him from keeping right on to the end, for God and for us. Here with him, we are completely disarmed but without fear, without hatred. We'll be able to bear witness that he gave everything.

He was entrusted to me from the start. How else could I express it, apart from entrusting him to God each day? A mother knows that you love before you can see. That's where a whole lifetime is woven. Life is never mastered; it can only be given. Every birth is a passing through the unknown toward the joy of a new presence. At the foot of the cross, still not knowing, a mother can believe that this passion is another passing.

He is stripping away the rags that lies had dressed death up in, trying to persuade people that it was the cause of their misfortunes, the price they had to pay for their faults. That caricature was the basis for the emotional blackmail designed to make us give up, arguing that there was no point going on living since everything was doomed to destruction anyway. Now

he is revealing the original face of humanity, the one that God has always been hoping to see: another giving himself entirely and freely.

Is it possible for a mother to be brought to birth by her own son? Today he is leading me ever farther along the path of life. He is inviting me to become a mother all over again. The cross has not silenced the song that the gift of God first brought bursting out, since he has been faithful to the end. The accomplished gift sustains the same song as the gift received.

Magnificent, indeed, the Lord.

The centurion

I was in charge of the unit carrying out the Governor's sentence. I was obliged to certify that the criminals were dead. So I followed the whole process, I was there when the Nazarene died.

I've risen from the ranks of the best army there is. I learned to be a soldier during military campaigns, defending frontiers, repressing uprisings, keeping order.... I've frequently encountered savage rage. That's why we're here, to keep it under control. You have to be tough if you're going to assure security, with so many kinds of violence around. If you are unsure of yourself or your mission, you'll never be able to keep control when push comes to shove.

Throughout my career I've either been training men or confronting them. If you want to know what keeps people going, listen to them the night before a battle.

Who do they call on? People with nothing to lose are inclined to collapse as quickly as they catch fire.

No vigil is more solemn than the last moments of a condemned man before execution. There, everyone is equal. There is no more effective moment of truth. Some curse father and mother; others go off their heads. A criminal remains full of revolt or fear, the hidden face of the violent acts he committed.

I've accompanied a lot of condemned criminals; this one amazed me. Where did he find the strength, so frail, ascetic, after being flogged and beaten? It's hard enough to go into battle in serried ranks, fully trained, well equipped, and he was naked, alone, and the fatal outcome was already certain. No one suffers like that for mere ideas.

Who could understand? They came out like people going to the games to watch gladiators confront wild animals. There were some who were hoping for a miracle or for a prophet to come and deliver him. They're always ready to give their vote to a winner. They dream of a God hailed in triumph, one who forces people's admiration. But today everything was dark, God did not resist, did not impose himself.

So they gave themselves a nasty fright and went back home relieved to have escaped such a fate. Do they realize that some of the condemned are innocent, that it is to keep better control of the people that those in power punish the daring?

Such a lesson he gave! He took everything, he showed where evil leads. It's enough to make you give up on humanity. Only he was there, the only one who

did not give up. He paid no attention to his sufferings, he cursed no one. We reckoned we had him under our power, yet he was the one who was guarding us all the time, praying for each of us.... His revenge will never overcome anyone, but his forgiveness will pursue them all.

Who ever heard of a man sacrificing himself for his persecutors, saving his enemies from violence? If that man on the cross stayed good to the end for his persecutors and killers, who could he ever have been bad for?

How could he do it? How could he keep hoping in them? It would take more than human strength. Only God could endure the wicked in that way, wanting all to have life.

The women at the tomb

We were going to have to finish the funeral rites for Jesus. We had been interrupted by the beginning of the Sabbath at nightfall. We got the ointments and spices ready so that we could return at daybreak after the Sabbath ended. We were still in a turmoil, full of images of his passion and the screams of hatred. Sorrow, anger, confusion, amazement dominated us in turn.

Surely he had patiently encouraged us to believe that he truly was the Messiah promised by God, coming to bring about his kingdom of peace, give light to all peoples? Surely the signs he accomplished had

fulfilled the prophecies of old? Yet they rejected him, persisted in their pride and blindness. They mocked him and drove him out. They preferred lies and violence in the hope of becoming masters of the world. Is evil going to win and humanity remain its prisoners? Is our hope dead? Has God failed? Why did he not resist? Why that silence?

The questions kept coming, one after another, endlessly. Yet none of the riddles could match what had happened. It was too enormous to be a simple mistake, or a mere conjunction of cowardice, jealousy and fanaticism. The fury with which they had pursued the innocent victim who had consecrated himself to God went far too far beyond all reason.

It seemed that his tomb would bring our misfortune back to us, but God took us by surprise there. We were seized with dread. Beyond the heavy stone that had sealed the separation, enclosing Jesus in darkness, silence and disgrace, his messenger was waiting for us. God had not despised the mortal remains of one just crucified, he was not ashamed to be found there. He revealed things that no human mind could conceive:

“Do not give in to fear. I am not angry, I blame no one for anything, I do not accuse. They killed my Son but I shall not take revenge, I do not wish to punish anyone, I have no truck with violence. Evil claims to have triumphed, yet it has no further power over you. Fear not.

“You did not come here simply out of an obligation to complete the rituals before going back home, back to your memories, back to mourn. You are seeking the one who gave his life on the cross. Despite the immense pain,

the contradictions and the anxiety, you cannot forget him because you do not want to stop loving him.

“He meant more than anything to you, you stayed to the bitter end; you bore him to this tomb. You can bear witness that nothing made him turn aside. He did not try to defend himself; he did not avoid the confrontation with evil. He gave his life to the very end, not even death could stop him. His is a love stronger than death. You want to know him in order to live by him. That is whom you are seeking.

“He is risen; he sleeps no more. Brought to silence, he was not destroyed; he lives. Death could not prevent him from loving. Death did not engulf him; he gathered it up into life.

“I have kept silence until now, but now I can proclaim it: he succeeded in his mission, I am not sad, I am not desolate on his account, I am proud and grateful and I invite you into my joy. He it is who has accomplished the hope I have nourished from the first moment of creation. He was the first to respond completely to my expectation. Humans, in their freedom, were able to exclude me, but he attests that a man can also love more than anything.

“He accused them of nothing. He rejected no-one. He did not allow fear or discouragement to divide them from him; he bore them within himself, he never stopped believing in them. All alone on the cross he interceded. No-one has ever asked me for such a thing: ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’

“No-one has ever trusted in me to such an extent. By remaining faithful to the extreme limit, he explored me to a depth never before attained. I did not stop him, did

not prevent him from loving to that extent. On the cross, I allowed myself to be stripped, not by the wicked but by the love of Jesus. Freely he rid himself of everything. All alone, his bare hands nailed to the cross, he freed death of the mask that turned it into a punishment, a fearful enemy. He welcomed it as the possibility to expect everything, offer everything.

“I accepted everything, rejected nothing, not even his given body, his shed blood, I accepted everything as a precious offering. When humanity banished me, when darkness covered all the earth, he alone remained open, I was able to rest in him all through the long night. He was my consolation. I have never wished for any other dwelling-place than the Yes spoken freely by a human heart. He offered me that. He showed that a human being, even one utterly diminished, even on the brink of death, can be my home. My presence in the world is only maintained by the slender thread of human goodness. He welcomed me wholly in himself, and now I welcome him in Heaven.

“Leave behind your ointments, all that you prepared. He has escaped from your grasp, but you have accepted his love. Death has taken nothing from you, you will find him if you keep seeking. He is going ahead of you, never ceasing to wait for you, wherever two or three are together in his name, along the roads of Galilee, among those who ask for nothing more than a glass of fresh water.

“Since he gave his life for every human being, you can love them. Since they were so precious to him that he did not want to lose a single one, you too can serve them. Now it is your turn to live a self-giving, in the spirit of Jesus, amidst those who know nothing of him.... If you welcome

the least of his brothers and sisters, you will be living with him and he will dwell in your hearts.”

Thomas

My companions claimed he was alive, but was he really the one people had crucified? Their declarations awoke in me nothing but a fear of illusion.

I knew that Jesus was heading for death. It was a given thing, once he decided to go up to Jerusalem.

Wicked, stupid people had made him fail, how could they deserve salvation? It was a scandal that I refused to keep silent about and I wouldn't listen to anything else.

He came bursting through my refusals, joined me where I was, isolated and alone. The presence of the one who gave everything is the gift that opens you to others and to life.

By his wounds, that had sent me fleeing in horror, by his broken body given utterly till death, he challenged me more strongly than any words ever could: “Don't let your pain and unhappiness keep you under their thumb. Am I not free and alive after the time of testing? Do not get in the way of life. Be a servant of the gift of God with me.”

Alive even in death, you are master of life and death. Present beyond death, you are the origin of life.

Your peace offered even on the cross has dissolved my revolts and delivers me from my nightmares. Your kindly presence dismisses my pain; your humility has

cleansed me of shame. Your forgiveness given to all keeps my heart open. Your life for God to the very end clears a way for me through the greatest solitude.

Nothing I can hold can satisfy me.... I no longer want to touch you; I no longer want to understand you. Allow me simply to rest on you, day after day.

Simon, son of John

You came to me poor, deprived of a voice, of rest, obviously thirsting, refusing to defend yourself, giving yourself on and on and hoping for everything from me; and so you put an end to my introspection; you delivered me from a massive burden of inner gloom.

Because you remain there without any other guarantee, with nothing but love to live, you awaken my heart from its absences. You free it from the thorns of anxiety, dragging it free of false shame and timidity.

Long before me, you believed I could love you, more than anything and for ever. Your faithful waiting promises a gift capable of growth. Your faith in that 'for ever' reveals just how close eternity is. And so there is gratitude that finally I can tell you this.

My heart had gone into hiding to escape so many serious voices. Unable to express itself, it might have been annihilated... but by inviting me to welcome you, you enabled me to lean on you.

For so long I had been snared by a feeling that I was incapable of love. But that was really simply the

reverse side of your forgotten invitation, "Are you willing to let yourself be loved?"

You do not know what my response will be, and have no control over it, but you desire it more than anything. Nothing can force it; nothing can keep me from it. That is where you wish to dwell.

You taught me to give what I did not have, beyond my lack of faith, from within my solitude.

An inhabitant of Jerusalem

As usual, the streets were packed with pilgrims up for the festival. They had travelled from all over the country, and from the Diaspora beyond, to celebrate God's Covenant with his people.

The condemnation of the Nazarene, that had caused such trouble the previous Passover, seemed forgotten. To start with, he had provoked much hope but his last visit to the city had been fatal; he had fallen into a trap.

It was the high day of the festival when it happened. People were startled by loud shouting. We recognized the Galileans. Had they been drinking? They emerged fearlessly from their hiding-place and were mingling with everyone. It was such a surprise to discover the disciples of Jesus, whom we had believed to be in complete disarray, so free and joyful. They demanded nothing, denounced nobody. Their mouths were full of songs of gratitude and peace.

Then Simon, that fisherman from Capernaum, spoke up boldly:

“God’s wisdom, power, will, seen in poor men like us, is nothing other than the Holy Spirit poured out on us so that we can live in forgiveness and share what we have received. God has been faithful to his promise. Our prophets announced what is fulfilled today. You are witnesses that God sends his Spirit. This communion with God is given without reserve, just as Jesus himself lived it. For God has shown the one whom you condemned as a dangerous usurper to be his Servant and his beloved Son. He has taken him to himself.

“We did not understand either, at first. But Jesus is alive. I denied him in fear and shame, but then I met him. He, the one crucified, lifted me up from the despair that had engulfed me.

“Forget every other concern, turn to him, become dwellings of the Holy Spirit.”