

**1<sup>st</sup> Station**  
**JESUS RISES FROM DEATH**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Mt 28:1-7.**

**Reflection**

We live in a world full of graves – the graves of hatred, immorality, exploitation, oppression, defeatism, practical atheism . . .

Sometimes we feel that our very life has become a grave, with so much of us buried therein! The Resurrection brings us the good news: death can be conquered, thanks to Christ's victory.

We need to rediscover the reality of the Resurrection and its power. We need to let its power enter our hearts and show itself in our lives.

Of all the "good news" that may be trumpeted around, this is the "original one" – the mother and foundation of every good news: CHRIST IS RISEN AND WE CAN RISE WITH HIM!

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we thank you • for the good news of your Resurrection, • for the earthquake and the broken seals, • for the heavy tombstone flung aside. • As so many pieces of bad news • darken our horizon and our hearts, • the message from your angel • assures us that it is life, and not death, • that has the last word. • Remove from our society • all the signs of the "culture of death" • and make us heralds and instruments • of the "culture of life" that you inaugurated • and established with your Resurrection.

**Appropriate Song**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Station**  
**PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 20:1-8.**

**Reflection**

Jesus has left many signs of his Resurrection to help our weak faith. The empty tomb is the first. An empty tomb can be very silent. But the tomb of Christ is extremely eloquent. It proclaims, for all those who want to hear, that Jesus Christ is indeed risen from death.

Like Peter and John, we visit the empty tomb of Christ to find in it fullness of meaning for our lives, and the courage to go ahead, in spite of all difficulties.

People focus more easily on the negative than the positive. And so life becomes like an immense cemetery, filled with the victims of our negative approach.

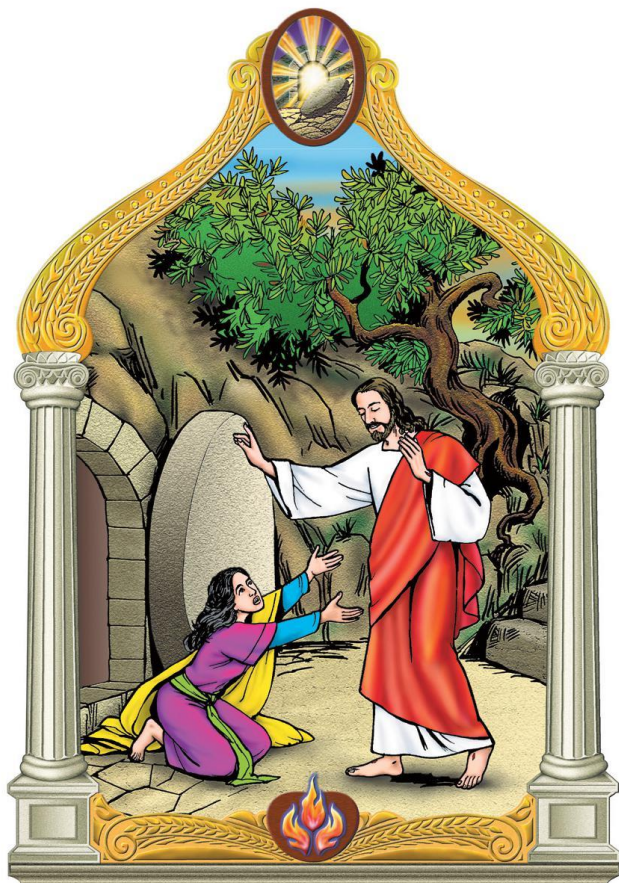
We should learn to discover in our lives the “signs” of the invisible presence of the Risen Christ, in spite of the many graves that line up our paths.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, often your empty tomb • is not enough for us. • We need to see other “signs” • that you are really alive, • Enable us, with your grace, • to “see” the many signs of your Resurrection • in the Church, in her sacraments, • in the lives of the good people around us, • and especially in those ordinary actions • done with patience, generosity, and sincere love. • Make us “convincing signs” • that you have shattered the fetters of death • and have sowed in us the seed • of the undying life of God’s grace.

**Appropriate Song**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST APPEARS**  
**TO MARY MAGDALENE**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 20:11-18.**

**Reflection**

There are fears and worries which do not allow us to see the presence of Christ in our lives. We sometimes linger by the graves of our past failings or the hurts inflicted upon us.

It is then that Jesus calls us by name – a sign that he knows us well and cares for us. Then we realize how wonderful it is to feel him so near.

Jesus does even more than just consoles us. He sends us on a mission: the mission to be announcers and witnesses of the Resurrection by the way we think, the way we speak, the way we work, by the way we suffer, and the way we rejoice, by the way we love, the way we live, the way we die.

**Prayer**

Call us by name, Lord, • and reawaken in us the spirit of faith • in your constant presence. • Call us by name, Lord, • when we find ourselves drowning • in the raging ocean of our defeats and hurts, • when we are tempted to say or do • what we will regret bitterly in days to come. • Call us by name, Lord, • when our lust or pride or greed or hatred • threatens to destroy in one instant, • in ourselves or others, • what we have labored to build for months or years. • Call us by name, O Lord, • and we shall be saved.

**Appropriate Song**

**4<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST WALKS**  
**WITH THE DISCIPLES OF EMMAUS**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Lk 24:13-19.25-29.**

**Reflection**

The road to Emmaus is often the road we walk – the road of our shattered dreams.

That is where Jesus joins us – a traveler with travelers. He listens to our stories and our worries first. And when his turn comes, he leads us to see that there is a meaning not only in what happened to him, but also behind our saddest tragedies . . .

Then the horizon of our minds and hearts begins to change, and we come to realize how different things can be when a fellow traveler like him walks by our side and opens our minds to truths that are so vital and so much a part of our existence.

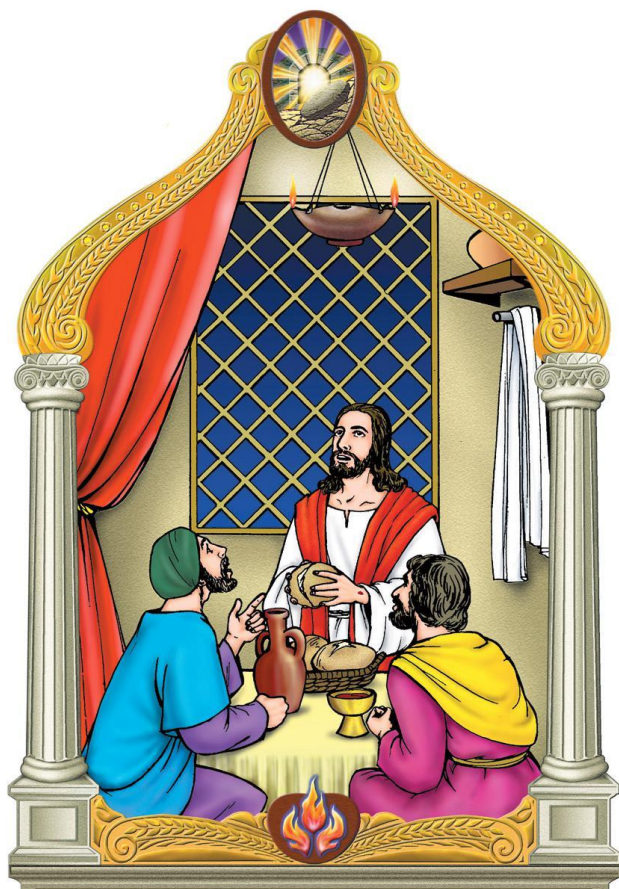
And we wish that he would always stay with us . . .

**Prayer**

Walk with us, Lord, • in the dark moments of our lives,  
• when all friends are gone, • and the enemies are many.  
• Walk by our side and be our fellow traveler • in the long journey • toward the Emmaus of our eternal rest, • and unlock for us the meaning • of those Scriptures in which the story of God • and our story merge into one. • Walk and abide with us • when the evening shadows fall • and our hearts yearn for peace and friends, • and for that rest that our souls can find in you alone.

**Appropriate Song**

**5<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF**  
**IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Lk 24:30-35.**

**Reflection**

There may be an Emmaus in our lives, too – moments when we realize the presence of Jesus in our lives and in our neighbor. We discover (or re-discover) his presence in the Eucharist that we have been celebrating routinely, day after day, like many other things we do, out of habit . . . .

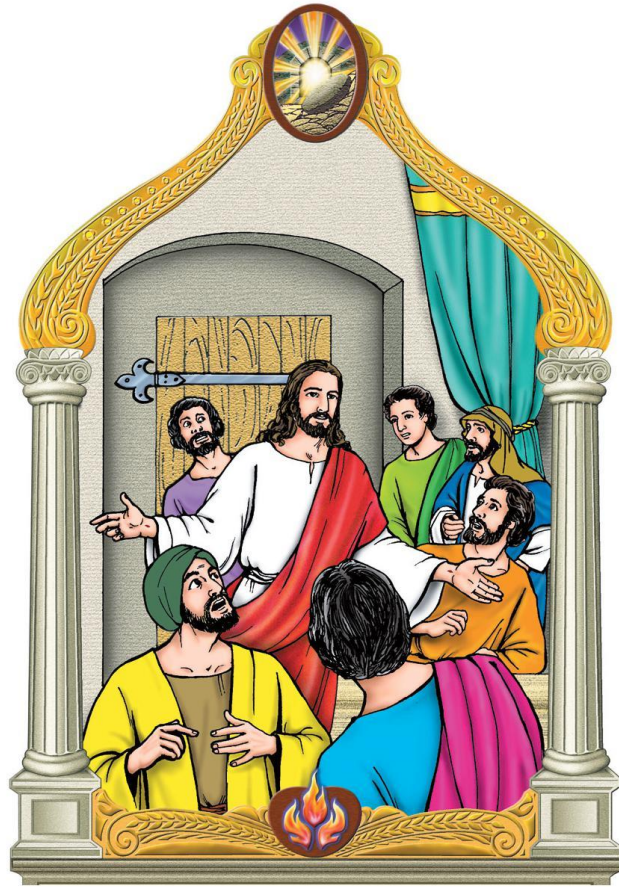
That is the time when our hearts catch fire, and we feel as if the whole world depended on us – on our telling everyone that Jesus is alive and we can testify to that . . . Emmaus – a turning point, the moment when the Resurrection of Christ becomes a reality in our lives and transforms us. Emmaus – Have we ever been there? . . . Do we know how to get there? . . .

**Prayer**

Break bread with us, Lord Jesus, • thus sharing our poverty and our needs. • Break your Bread for us – • the Bread of the pure and of the strong, • the Bread in which you chose to imprison yourself • to be the divine food for our weary hearts. • the Bread that reveals and makes present • to every generation the fruits • of your Passion, Death and Resurrection. • Break your Bread for us, O Lord, • and reveal yourself to us. • and transform us into heralds of your Resurrection – • that great Event which gives life to the world • and gives meaning and hope to our lives. • Break your Bread for us, Lord. • Our hearts are hungry for you! • Make every day a lasting Emmaus • since early morning.

**Appropriate Song**

**6<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST APPEARS**  
**TO HIS DISCIPLES**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Lk 24:36-43.**

**Reflection**

How strong is our faith in the reality of Christ's Resurrection? Sometimes doubts may cross our minds . . . . What if his "Resurrection" was only a "story" made up by that bunch of dispirited people who desperately needed "something big" in order to keep the pieces of their lives together? . . ."

No way! Christ has indeed risen. And the signs of his Resurrection are many for those who want to see. They are the presence and ever-new vitality of the Church; those millions of lives spent in total dedication to the good of others; the hope and trust with which believers face the dark walls of death . . . .

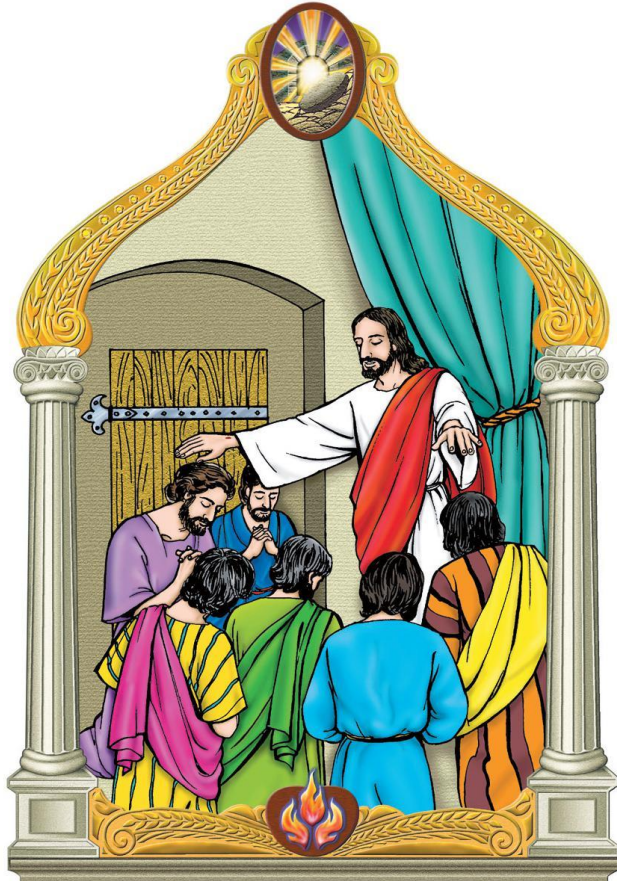
We do not see the Risen Christ alive today, but we do see these signs. We see, and we believe. And our hearts are at peace.

**Prayer**

Grant us your peace, Lord Jesus, • the peace that you alone can give, • the peace that we have searched for in vain • in shameful compromises and surrenders. • Grant us your peace, Lord, • to overcome the fears that grip us • at the thought of our sins. • Grant us your peace, Lord, • at the end of every day and in a special manner, • when the struggle of this life is over, • and we, full of scars and guilt, • knock at your door, trusting only • in the healing power of your merciful love.

**Appropriate Song**

**7<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST GIVES HIS**  
**DISCIPLES THE POWER TO FORGIVE SINS**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 20:19-23.**

**Reflection**

Over the centuries, the Risen Christ our Savior, bestows on us his life-giving forgiveness through the Church, in the power of the Spirit.

This is how the “Holy Church,” in spite of the frailty and sinfulness of its ministers, has been able to bring people back to life, to restore peace and hope to the hearts of those who repent and confess their sins.

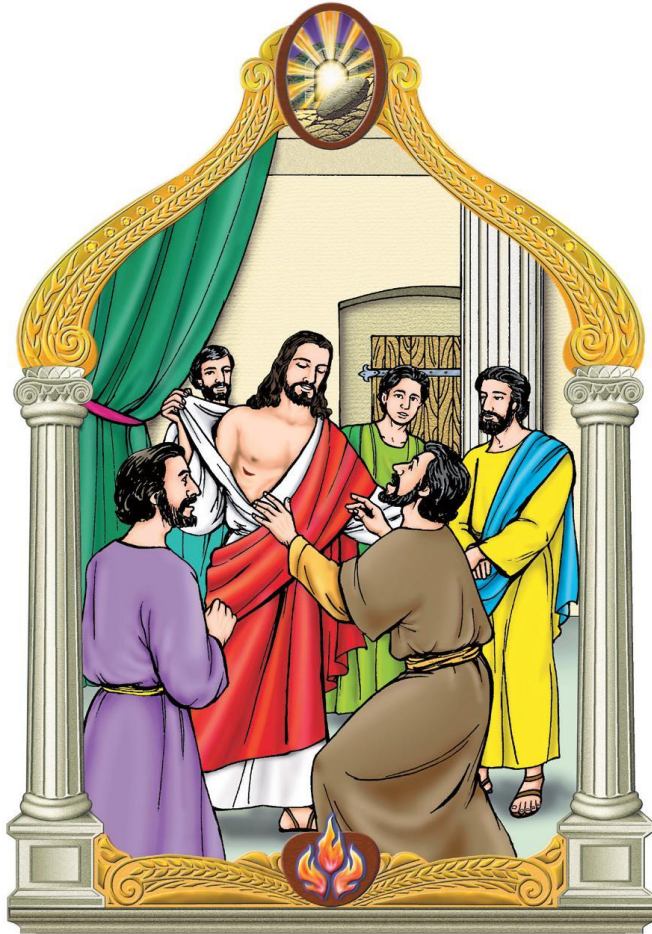
God saves people through people empowered by the Spirit. Thus does Easter become an everlasting event – the experience of a new life offered to all generations and to every individual believer, through the Church.

**Prayer**

Thank you for the gift of your presence, Lord. • Thank you for strengthening the faith of your disciples • by showing them the marks of your suffering • which proved the reality of your Death and Resurrection. • Thank you for making them and us • sharers in your mission in the world. • Thank you for the gift of the Spirit • with whom you empowered your Church • to be the channel of your forgiveness. • Your Easter generosity overwhelms us • and makes us share in the fullness of joy • that your Resurrection brings • to each of us and all mankind. • We have nothing to offer you in return, • save our frail hearts, eager to welcome you • and live for you for ever.

**Appropriate Song**

**8<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST APPEARS TO THOMAS**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 20:24-29.**

**Reflection**

Thomas the “positivist,” the “rationalist,” is the prototype of the world of today which refuses to believe, unless it can see, and touch and verify what the Church proclaims . . .

How will “the world” believe in the reality of the Resurrection if it does not see “proofs” that Christ is alive even today? . . . The Church as the community of Christ’s disciples should be the first “sign” of the reality of the Resurrection.

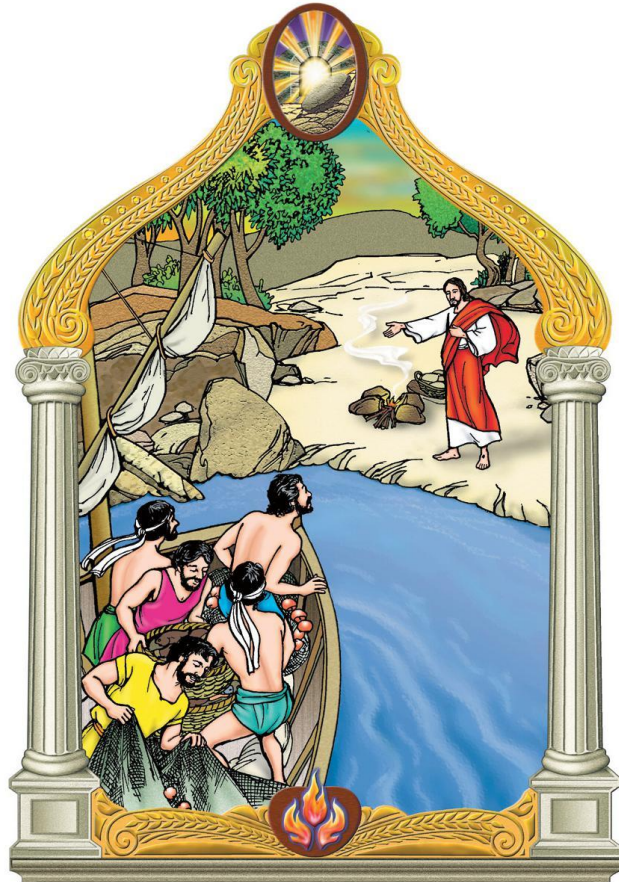
Each one of us should be a “sign” of the Resurrection. Are we? . . . Does our way of thinking, our way of speaking, our way of living proclaim convincingly that Jesus is our Lord and our God?

**Prayer**

Forgive us, Lord, for our slowness to believe. • Forgive, O Lord, our temerity • in daring to demand that you give us proofs • of the reality of your Resurrection, • while closing our eyes to the numberless signs • of your love for us • at every step, every moment of our life. • Forgive us, Lord, for our failure • to be to those around us a clear sign of the reality of your Resurrection. • May all our attitudes, words and deeds • be a constant witness to the reality of the new life • which you bestowed on us through your resurrection. • Do fill us, Lord, • with the blessings that you have in store • for those who believe without having seen you.

**Appropriate Song**

**9<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 21:1-9.13.**

**Reflection**

We too often work hard but without results. Our life, even our apostolic life, remains sterile.

Today the lesson is: let us follow Jesus' instructions and we shall experience wonders in our life. His instructions may sometimes appear not to be in line with the principles of modern management. But they are in line with God's "strategy" to bring about the fulfillment of His plan of salvation.

Jesus is the one who holds the secret for a really successful life. He has ever new ways of manifesting his presence among us.

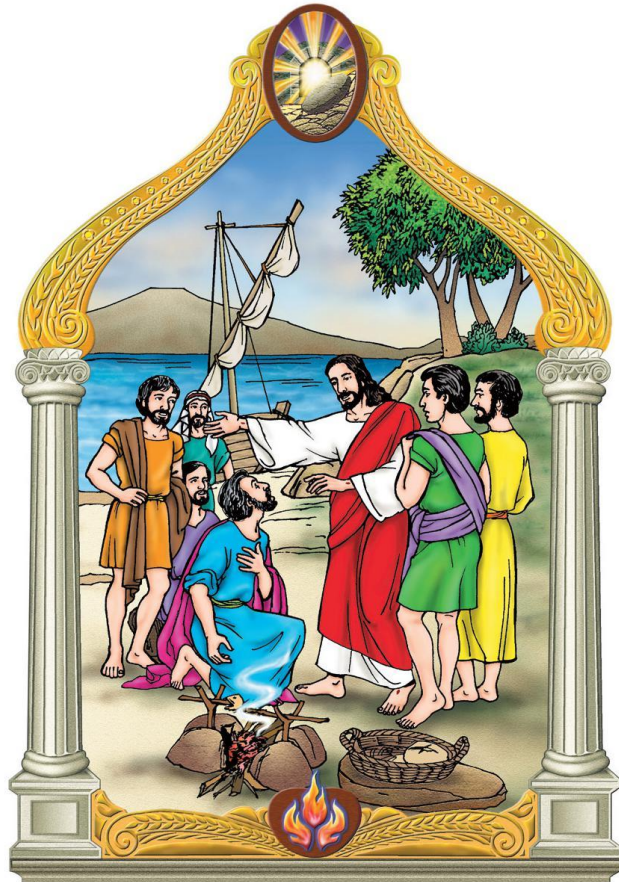
He is a "God of surprises." He never stops surprising us with his generosity and care.

**Prayer**

Teach us, Lord, • what to do to make our life a success.  
• Teach us to work in a way that we build with you • the wonderful construction of your Kingdom. • Teach us to work in a spirit of faith • with patience, wisdom and love, • in all humility and perseverance, • in full awareness that it is you • who builds the house and gives it stability. • Remind us that, if we do not work with you, • we labor in vain • under the scorching sun • or in the dark nights of a fruitless life.

**Appropriate Song**

**10<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST ENTRUSTS**  
**THE CARE OF THE CHURCH TO PETER**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Jn 21:15-17.**

**Reflection**

There is a lakeshore of Galilee in our life, too, where Jesus awaits us to bring out from us a profession of our love.

He does not need to hear it for he knows what is in our hearts. It is we who need to proclaim it to ourselves and others, in all courage and sincerity, to make up for the times we have failed to show it in practice . . .

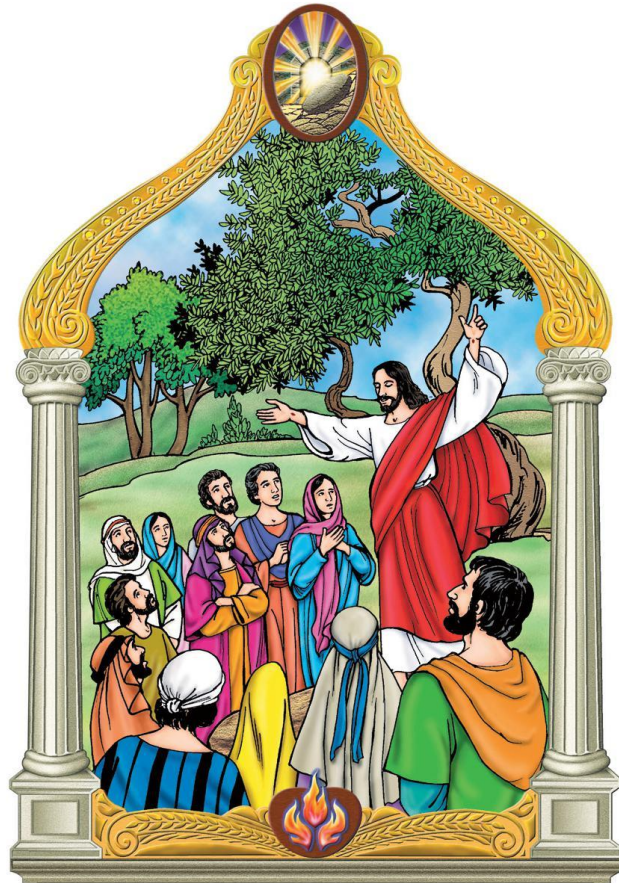
The decisive question about our present and our future is, as it was for Peter, whether we love Jesus or not. If we do, our love will cover a multitude of sins. If we don't, nothing can make up for this deficiency. In the eyes of God, what matters most is not the number of our failures, but the sincerity of our determination and effort to make up for them by deeds of genuine love.

**Prayer**

Thank you, Lord, for giving your flock, the Church, • a visible Head Shepherd who, • in your name, • guides us all to the meadows of eternal life. • Thank you, O Lord, for reminding him and us • that what matters in life • is the sincerity of our love for you – • a love that is not frightened by our own failings, • nor by the violence of the attacks • that are unleashed against those who dare • to stand by you, no matter what . . . • a love that trusts only • in the power of your grace • and the depth of your love.

**Appropriate Song**

**11<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST SENDS HIS**  
**DISCIPLES TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Mt 28:16-20.**

**Reflection**

The mandate of Jesus to his Apostles is addressed also to us. We know that we are even weaker than the Apostles at the beginnings of the Church. The world has become wider and more unreceptive. The new pagans of today say that Christianity does not make any difference, after all, and that any religion is as good as another. Some even say that no religion may be the best of all . . .

And yet the words of Jesus still echo in our hearts: “Go . . . teach . . . baptize.”

He entrusts to us the salvation of the world. No less than this. An awesome task, indeed. But, fear not! We are not left to ourselves, for he promised: “I am with you always!” If Jesus is with us, what more could we ask for? . . .

**Prayer**

It is beautiful, Lord, • to hear you say that your work goes on; • to hear you send your apostles and us • to proclaim to the nations of the world • the richness of your love for all. • It is wonderful to hear you reassure them and us • that you will always be with your Church • to steady its course and to direct it. • We thank you, Lord, • for your trust and the mission to proclaim and make present, • wherever we are, • the Kingdom you brought to this earth – • to make of all peoples a family of nations • gathered into one by the one God of love.

**Appropriate Song**

**12<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE RISEN CHRIST ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Acts 1:6-11.**

**Reflection**

We live in the time of the Church, the time to carry on what Jesus began, and to carry out what he taught; in the power of the Spirit.

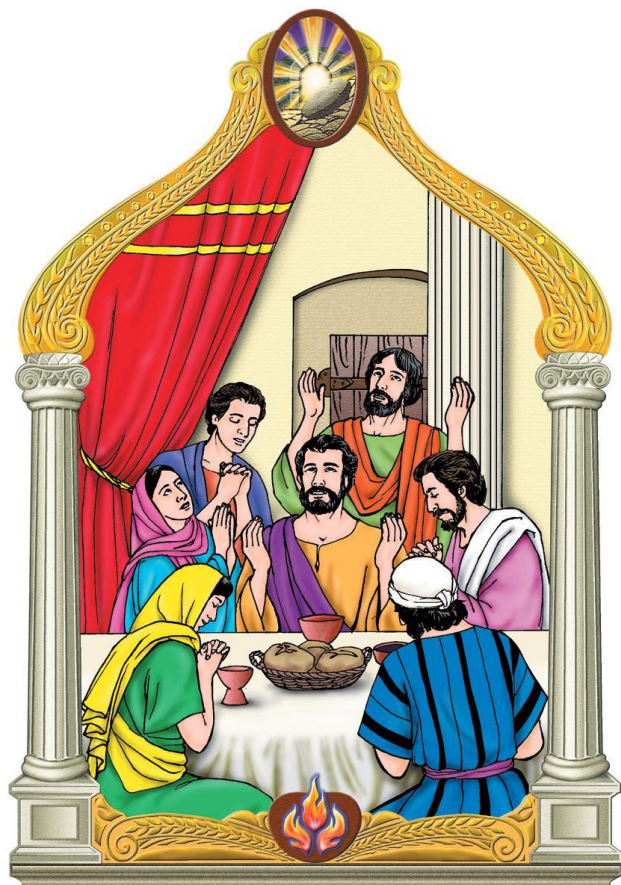
We are not allowed to lose sight of the tragedies and challenges of this earth, for this is *our* earth, the only earth we have, the one entrusted to us by the Creator. We have a job to do – a mission to accomplish: to make this earth a real “home” where the children of the one Father live in harmony, dignity and love. This is where the Kingdom begins and has to grow.

**Prayer**

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ! • We praise and worship you, • as you share the glory of the Almighty for ever. • We give you thanks for making us • the heirs of your mission. • We have learned at your school • that the world can and must become • the beginning of God’s Kingdom – • where justice is not just a dream; • a place where peace is not just an aspiration; • where the greatest yearning should not be • to grab what we lust for, • but to give to those in need till it hurts . . . • We are called to believe in the Kingdom; • to pray for its coming; • to work for its realization, to suffer for its purification . . . • till it becomes a wonderful reality, • fulfilled in you and through you, our eternal King.

**Appropriate Song**

**13<sup>th</sup> Station**  
**THE DISCIPLES PREPARE TO RECEIVE**  
**THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Acts 1:12-14.**

**Reflection**

All those who are called to work for the Kingdom will always experience a feeling of unworthiness and inadequacy, together with the need to be enlightened, guided and strengthened by the Spirit.

The job is far too demanding. Yet, some Christians seem to consider the presence of the Holy Spirit as a dispensable add-on.

Others plan their lives and apostolate as if Mary had nothing to do with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit, in the plan of God for the salvation of mankind.

Are we aware that without the Spirit we cannot accomplish the wonderful mission entrusted to us by the Lord? Are we aware that Mary is our best ally, our best teacher from whom we can learn how to welcome the Spirit and collaborate with him?

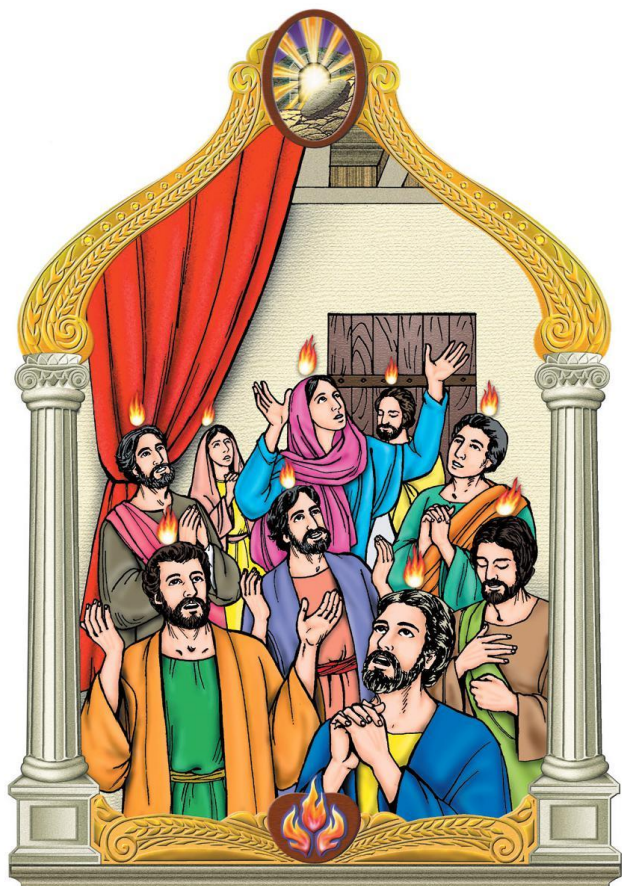
**Prayer**

Forgive our pride, Lord. • For so long, and so many times, • we have planned and acted • as if everything depended on us, and us alone. • And so our lives have become crammed with failures – • failures that stall the Kingdom • along the highway of history . . . • Forgive our forgetting that the Kingdom is yours and that we are just laborers in it. • Forgive our losing sight • of the motherly presence of Mary in our midst, • and her power to help us. • Realizing our inadequacy, • we fall on our knees and pray with Mary:

“COME, HOLY SPIRIT, WE NEED YOU!”

**Appropriate Song**

**14<sup>th</sup> Station  
THE RISEN CHRIST SENDS  
THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

**All:** Because by your Resurrection you gave life to the world. Alleluia!

**Read Acts 2:1-6.14.22-24.36.**

**Reflection**

We are the heirs of the stunning beginning of the Church at Pentecost. The torch set afire by the Spirit was handed over to us the day we were confirmed. An immense world is all around us. It needs to hear the Good News of Christ today as much as it needed it 2000 years ago. Mankind needs to be united into one family in the name of Christ's love, in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit is at hand, ready to transform us into brave heralds of the Good News; ready to touch the hearts of those we talk to. Indeed, he is ready to do his part, just as he did on Pentecost day. Are we ready to do *our* part? . . .

**Prayer**

Spirit of the living God, • Spirit of the Risen Christ, • you have come to us in spite of all our unworthiness, • to renew in us the wonders you performed • in the first batch of Jesus' followers. • You have made us new. • You have made us strong and daring. • You have made us wise and holy. • You have made us yours. • Come to us again, and again, • to continuously purify our thoughts and aspirations, • to strengthen our feeble and weary hearts, • to keep us steady and single-minded • in our journey. • Come, Holy Spirit, we need you, Come, Holy Spirit, we pray. • Come with your own gentle power, • Come, and lead us in God's way!

**Appropriate Song**

## CONCLUSION

### Renewal of the Baptismal Promises

The Leader lights some candles at the Easter Candle, then he passes them on to some of the participants who, in turn, will light the candles of the rest of the congregation.

As this is done, each of those who pass on the light, may say:

***“Go, bring the light of the Risen Christ to all those you meet.”***

Each participant who receives the light responds:

***Amen!***

When the candles of all the participants have been lit, the Baptismal Promises are renewed, using the formula of the Easter Vigil. Each of the participants should have his/her own copy of these Promises.

Final hymn:

***“It’s time for us to make our dreams come true . . .”***

or any other suitable hymn.

# THE TRAIL OF LIGHT

REFLECTIONS  
ON THE EVENT, FRUITS  
AND CHALLENGES  
OF  
THE RESURRECTION

by

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## Introduction

The Trail of Light, or **Via Lucis**, is one of the new pious practices which are the fruit of the renewed spirituality ushered in and fostered by Vatican II. It is essentially rooted in the Holy Scriptures and centered on Jesus Christ, particularly his Resurrection and glorification.

It is the ideal and spontaneous sequel to the **Via Crucis** – the **Way of the Cross**, in which we meditate on the sufferings and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And just as the Resurrection is the indispensable completion of the Paschal Mystery, so is the **Trail of Light** the indispensable completion of the **Way of the Cross**.

This is why, even structure-wise, the **Trail of Light** is patterned after the **Way of the Cross**. In fact, it consists of **14 “Stations”** and includes **Readings from the Scriptures, reflections, prayers, and/or songs** on the themes of the different stations. In order to make this resemblance and relatedness even more obvious, the pious exercise is introduced by an appropriate song and an opening prayer, while every Station is introduced by an **Acclamation** and a **Response**.

But, in spite of this obvious similarity in structure, the overall spiritual disposition and “climate” which characterize the **Trail of Light** are very different from those of the **Way of the Cross**. The **Trail of Light**, in fact, is characterized by **serenity** and **happiness** – the serenity and happiness that we derive from the Resurrection of the Lord.

This “Easter serenity/happiness” does not stop at the Resurrection or other post-resurrection events in the life of Jesus. It is also constantly related to the daily life of those celebrating the **Trail of Light**.

This means that the Resurrection is viewed not only as an event that concerns Jesus, but also a **gift and a challenge addressed to each believer as well as to the whole Christian community** – the challenge to rise from one’s moral falls and deficiencies, and to live a new life in the light of the “newness” brought to us by Christ’s Resurrection.

This pious practice, then, has a deep **existential dimension**, inasmuch as it is basically related to our own experience and is “**commitment-oriented**.” The **Trail of Light**, therefore, is intended to become a **way of life**.

Not all the parts of each Station need to be used. Nor need all the 14 Stations be read and meditated upon every time. For pastoral reasons, or due to time constraints, only some of the Stations may be used at a time, in order to leave more time for the **Reflection**, the **Prayer(s)**, and the **singing**.

In every Station the **essential elements** are the **Biblical Reading** and the personal or communitarian **Reflection**, followed by the **Prayer** printed in the pamphlet or spontaneous ones prepared by the participants.

The **Trail of Light** can be either a community/group celebration, or an individual meditation. The most appropriate time is the Easter period, but it is **suitable for any time of the year**, except the Lenten Season, when all the attention should be focused on the Suffering and Death of our Lord, and the traditional pious practice is the **Way of the Cross**.

Other appropriate occasions for the celebration of the **Trail of Light** are:

- \* **Sundays,**
- \* **after making one’s sacramental confession,**
- \* **at the conclusion of a recollection or retreat,**
- \* **at funeral wakes . . .**