



### Message for Holy Week and Easter 2015

“Choose life!” This is God’s plea to his people, a plea which echoed in our churches during the first week of Lent as a few lines of the book of Deuteronomy were proclaimed (30.19). Isn’t it surprising to hear God plead with his people, beg them, implore them to make this choice? Perhaps God has to plead with us because the choice is neither evident nor easy. However, it is always crucial.

The adjective “crucial” comes from the Latin *crux*, meaning “cross”. A choice is said to be crucial when we are at the crossroads, facing the Cross of Jesus. The Crucified One invites us to bear the sufferings of one another, to keep patient vigil together in the darkness, to listen even in death for life’s heartbeat. When Christians enter the tomb with Jesus, it is not to choose death, but to be witnesses of love and hope, even as the signs of life flicker and become invisible. Our mission is not to roll the rock over the grave but, together with the One who goes before us, to invite the world to be open to light and life.

These are the crucial choices we are called to make. To offer love and encouragement to the dying, so they are part of the fabric of community and care which extends beyond death. To bear the pains of existence with those who struggle with dependencies and addictions, offering comfort and assurance in times of loneliness and anguish. To confess our own failings and limitations as we journey with criminals, trusting that every person can one day be healed and so bring healing to another. To accept our own fears and vulnerabilities in the face of violence, as we search together for a way out of injustice and exploitation. To build bridges and respect for all as we insist on the dignity of human life and community.

The Risen Jesus breathed upon the disciples and offered them peace. With him, we too are to breathe life into our relationships, our communities, our work and our world. The Spirit of peace and joy we offer does not prefer death. Invited, compelled, by the Spirit, we seek and protect life. The Risen Christ is with us – in the womb; on the death bed; in the fields and houses of our Galilees, and beyond. The love that God calls us to offer is stronger than death; the life we share extends more deeply and far further than the grave.

“Choose life!” This is the “crucial” choice each of us must make. Out of this choice rises every Hallelujah! For in Christ, our hope lives. He is risen. Risen indeed.

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