



From the desk of the CEO
Mario J. Paredes

**EASTER:
Everyone CROSSES OVER, every day ...**

Easter Sunday is an essential Christian holy day. Easter is a liturgical season lasting approximately six weeks, starting at the most significant Sunday of the Catholic liturgical year, when we celebrate Christians' greatest confession of faith – proclaiming Christ risen and alive in the life of Christians and in the ecclesial community – and lasting until the solemnity of Pentecost.

Although it is the most significant annual holy day for Catholic Christians, the celebration of Easter has a universal message, i.e., a valid message for all men and women of good will, from any location, race, religious creed, political ideology, socio-educational level, social position, etc.

The Spanish word for Easter, PASCUA, comes from a Hebrew word meaning "CROSSING OVER". Easter was already celebrated by the men and women of the Old Testament when they commemorated the "**crossing**" of the Red Sea (cf. Ex 12-15), through which they were freed from the oppression to which they had been subjected for several centuries by the Egyptians. Later, the men and women of the Old Testament, converted now to Christianity, continued celebrating Easter, but with a new essence and meaning: the triumph and "transition" of life over death, the victory and "triumph" of good over sin in the person of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ was crucified (cf. Ac 5:30), the first Christians who witnessed his Resurrection and confessed and proclaimed him as Living God (Mt 28:6) in their midst; these same first disciples made the transition from the old to the new (2 Cor 5:17), from selfishness to love, from those who are capable of recognizing themselves as brothers of the same God and Father (Gal 4:6), from sadness to joy (Jn 20:1- 18), from disbelief to peace (Jn 20:27), from cowardice to courage, from life alone to an existence where we can share bread with others (Lk 24:13-35), from the oppression of a life lived according to the law to a life lived in service and freely and generously given toward others (Mt 16:25), especially to those most in need (Mt 25:31ss).



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This was understood, lived and theologized, at the time, by men like Paul of Tarsus or John the Apostle when they wrote that Easter consists of the renewal of the mind (Rm 12:2) or in the "crossing over" from death to life, if we love one another (1 Jn 3:14ss).

It is enough to see and hear the news that the media and social networks give us to make us aware of all the deep problems and serious crises and conflicts now facing mankind in all the institutions that make up society and in all its facets.

These are conflicts that touch and involve the individual, the family, society, international relations, etc. Problems, conflicts and crises that manifest themselves in the loss of the value and meaning of life, in the solitude of many, in the use of psycho-addictive substances, in the breaking down of values, in the impermanence of family structures (divorces, de facto unions, infidelities, lack of commitment in marital couples, job instability, lack of social security for the family in many countries, intergenerational conflicts between parents and children, etc.); in administrative corruption; in lack of public services; unemployment; the loss of prestige, leadership and credibility of the religious institutions governing moral and social values; the lack of social opportunities for a personal and family life of dignity; the loss in the quality of education; the pursuit of personal and social fulfillment through hedonistic and pansexualist pleasure; by recognizing selfishness and materialism as supreme values and through abusive and confrontational power; in scandalous forms of social inequality; injustices; a thousand forms of violence and death; drug trafficking; arms races; exploitation, and irreversible damage to ecosystems; internal and international war conflicts; famines; epidemics and pandemics; moral relativism according to which nothing is worth anything or everything is equal; and, a total lack of the existential meaning of transcendence.

This list of personal, family, social, national and world ills represents the manifestations of a greater evil: the evil that lives within man, in the very heart of the human being (cf. Mk 7:21ss). The crisis of structures is first and foremost a crisis of men and women. The rotten fruits of our human



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coexistence and our societies are the product of bad trees, with diseased sap. Because "the tree is known by its fruits ... " (Mt 7:15ss).

The first and deepest causes of our personal and social discomfort must be sought in the gaps, deficiencies and losses within the human spirit. While we have made significant advances in science, in technology, in the capacity to telecommunicate amongst ourselves, in the globalization of markets and in the accumulation of great capital and lifestyles full of luxury and comfort, we have diminished the importance of the great principles and values that define the essential, intrinsic, innate spirit of the human being, that is, everything that makes us truly "human" and not inhuman.

EASTER has a message and a call for all to change and renew from within, to improve everything within us. EASTER is an auspicious time to pause on our journey and to start again. In Pauline terminology, we may cross over from the old man to the new man (cf. Col 3:10).

Today, the greatest emergency facing society and humanity demands of every human being an "Easter" experience, that is, an experience of "crossing over" inhumane, sub-human, or less humane circumstances and conditions to reach those that are more humane and worthy of people.

The desire for everyone, around the planet, to build better societies and a better world in which we achieve the happiness we relentlessly seek, challenges us all to a daily and ongoing Easter experience: that of being better human beings, better families, better professionals, better citizens in order to build the apocalyptic utopia of "a new heaven in a new land" (cf. Rev 21:1-8).

Thus, the celebration of Christian EASTER is not merely a Catholic liturgical celebration, but also a birthright of all humanity, a call to all and a daily task while we are living: to be men and women, new and renewed, capable of transforming ourselves, our personal lives, and through those, our institutions and social structures to be more just, more solidary, and more humane.

HAPPY EASTER!