

### **THE RISEN JESUS: GOD, CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE**

(In Argentina) I met a crowd that reminded me of the crowd that followed the Lord: the ordinary people who would stay for hours listening to Jesus until evening fell and they didn't know what to do. The crowd that followed Jesus was not a mass of individuals hypnotised by some deft orator, but a people with a history, with a hope, who safeguarded a promise.

The people always hold in their hearts a promise: an invitation that leads them toward what they desire, despite the exclusion they experience. Jesus' preaching evoked in them ancient promises they carried in their guts, in their blood: an ancestral awareness of God's closeness and of their own dignity. By bringing to them that closeness in the way He spoke and touched and healed, Jesus showed that awareness was real. He opened for them a path of hope into the future, a path of liberation that was not merely political but something more: a human liberation, that conferred that dignity that only the Lord can give us.

That's why they followed Jesus. He gave them dignity. In that powerful scene of Jesus alone with the woman caught in adultery, after her accusers have gone from the scene, Jesus anoints her with dignity and tells her: "Go your way, and from now on do not sin again" (John 8:11) For Jesus, every person is capable of dignity and has value. Jesus restores the true worth of each person and of the people as a whole because he sees with God's eyes.

To do this Jesus had to reject the mindset of the religious elites of his day, who had ownership of the law and tradition. Possession of the goods of religion became a means of putting themselves above others, others not like them, whom they inspected and judged..... By walking with the poor, the outcasts, and the marginalized, Jesus smashed the wall that prevented the Lord from coming close to his people, among his flock.

In showing God's closeness to the poor and sinners, Jesus indicted the mindset that trusts in self-justification, ignoring what happens around them, Jesus challenges the mindset that at its worst, leads to racist terms, denigrating those who do not belong to a particular group, which portrays migrants as a threat and builds walls to dominate and exclude. ((Excerpt from *'Let us dream'- The path to a better future* by Pope John Francis)

### **CHURCH IS ALIVE!**

While the public are still excluded from public worship, it is reassuring to know that the Church is very much alive. All last week (Holy Week) a constant flow of people came to pray at St. Mary's Dominican Church, Claddagh.

200 Bottles of blessed Easter water were quickly snapped up as was the blessed palm the previous week. In addition, the positive response of viewers to all the special ceremonies carried on the webcam was very encouraging.

Repeated compliments were paid to the contribution of the musicians involved and to the colourful and appropriate display of flowers and 'Easter Garden': a testament to the huge voluntary effort that continues during these challenging times.

The generous response to the Easter Dues collection has been very encouraging and supportive.

Next on the agenda is to prepare for resuming activities when restrictions are lifted.

As in every aspect of life, we will have to plan for changes in human behaviour.

Are you willing to be involved?