



Dear Sisters and Laity,

It is Good Friday, Jesus, on the cross, has loved us 'to the end'. All is 'consummated, finished, completed'. And yet, nothing is finished, the adventure is just beginning. For at this moment, when Jesus 'breathes His last, the Scriptures are also "completed", 'brought to completion', and therefore overflowing: they begin to speak as they have never spoken before, they mumble a new promise, still to be deciphered ...

It is the disciples, astonished, dejected, completely bewildered, who are the custodians of this promise and who will live this extraordinary experience, following in the footsteps of what Jesus was already doing: rereading the Scriptures, seeing God's plan shining through Jesus' own words and His whole life, the hope of humanity, reconciliation, forgiveness, ineffable communion, eternal Life....

That is also why at every Easter we hear the heavenly messengers announce that Jesus, freed from the bonds of death, awaits us in Galilee.

Why this insistence on returning to Galilee (Mk and Mt) or on remembering what Jesus said, taught when He was in Galilee (Lk)? Because the Risen One cannot be 'seen' without making His own journey. The signs that the Risen One will show are none other than those of the Crucified One, and it is thus as the Crucified-Risen One that He awaits us in Galilee.

Galilee is the centre of gravity of the activity of the earthly Jesus, where he took the first steps in His ministry of proclaiming God's salvation. Galilee is the homeland of the Gospel, it is the house of Peter, the 'home' of most of the disciples. To see Jesus in the region of His earthly activity means, therefore, to be able to fully understand Jesus.

This indicates that Galilee is not a purely geographical note, but has an existential value. It tells us that the resurrection is not a truth to be known, but an event to be experienced, that Jesus is not only known intellectually, but that He is Someone to be encountered and followed. And that the resurrection of Jesus is not only the confirmation of the divine identity of Jesus, but the resounding validation of his life choices, of His actions, of His project.

Along with the joyful announcement that the Lord is risen, we also receive the request and the promise: Go to Galilee, there you will see me. What does this mean for us today? How and why return to Galilee?¹

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Some of these reflections already shared at the Extended Council last November are inspired by Pope Francis' homilies during the Easter Vigil of 2014 and 2019.



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Commenting on these texts, Pope Francis tells us that going to Galilee means first of all, starting afresh, secondly, going to Galilee means taking new paths, and furthermore, Galilee means going to the ends of the earth.

Starting Afresh

Galilee represents the time and place of the encounter with Jesus, of the first call. There, for Him, we left everything and followed Him. To go, or rather, to return to Galilee is to return to the amazement of that beginning, of that first love, buried with time under so many other requirements, urgencies, responsibilities to which to respond..., or under our disappointments, tiredness, worries, or the subtle dust of routine, inadvertently accumulated in the long years of 'services rendered'. To return to Galilee is to rediscover the inspirational spark that made us begin to follow him. Galilee is for us, once again, our tenth hour (cf. Jn 1:39), the founding moment.

Galilee is also the time and place where Jesus calls, not only individually, but gathers His **community** around Him, educates it, forms it in discipleship and mission (Mk. 3). It is also the place of sending (Mt. 28). Today He says to us again: Go to Galilee. Not as a reproach or a command, but as a new opportunity, as a place of reunion. To start afresh, but not just any old way, but according to the style of the Master and His Kingdom project. Do we dare to start afresh? How and what can we do so that our communities, our entities and our whole Family return to Galilee?

Walking New Paths

Just as the women in the gospel, on seeing the empty tomb, reverse their route, change their path; they leave the tomb and run to announce a new direction to the disciples, we too are invited to move in the opposite direction to the tomb, because Jesus is no longer there. It is an exhortation to a change of mentality (*metanoia*) that implies a movement of departure, first of all, of departure from oneself; that demands letting go of those securities of what is already known: lifestyles, structures that block the circulation of life, of communion, of joy, of synodality. To return to Galilee is to walk together behind the Risen One, along a 'new and living' path that brings us closer to the people of today, to their search for meaning and makes us capable of responding to the new scenarios of a world in constant transformation.

Going to the Borders, to the Peripheries

It means moving away from the centre, because Galilee is that place on the periphery, that complex, border region, the crossroads of nations, where those who are furthest away not only from the capital, but also from the Law, from traditions, live. And yet, Galilee is the cradle of the Gospel, from there the message and the missionary programme of Jesus (cf. Lk. 4: 18-19), anointed by the Spirit to announce salvation to the excluded, to the fragile, to the poor, to those who struggle for daily life, to be the face and presence of God, who tirelessly seeks out those who are discouraged or lost.

It is there and nowhere else that the Risen One summons His disciples: at the crossroads of roads, peoples, beliefs, in this multifaceted Galilee, where the other, the different, comes to



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meet us and asks us to recognize and welcome both his right to difference and that of equality.²

Dear sisters and brothers, for us daughters and sons of Mother Gerine who are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the reunification of her Family, this invitation to go to Galilee takes on a particular connotation: it is a call to return to the sources, to the roots (to the essential, to the nucleus) of our charism. To return to the source, to Mother G rine's original experience before the image of the Pieta, in which the Father reveals to her that His mercy has and asks for a mother's face and lap that embraces and contains the miseries and weaknesses of humanity. She will become an instrument, a channel of that mercy so that every man and woman may know and feel that they are loved by Him (cf. Const. no. 4). It is necessary to enter into this experience in order to allow the charism to reach our heart, to become a heart that drives our life and our choices, that transforms our relationships, our language, our way of living and exercising authority, of going out to meet others.

The charism, which is a reality that is always dynamic, always developing, always open to new and more committed interpretations calls us to follow new paths, to a creative fidelity, because to guard the charism is to update it at every moment so that it does not lose its original beauty, its significance, so that it continues to speak, first of all to us who profess it, but also to the men and women of today.

A living charism walks, moves, has no fixed abode and wherever it arrives it is at home. This is the experience of our charism which, from the very beginning of our Family, has gone out to meet other cultures... and has pitched its tent in new peripheries. It is important to ask ourselves what does our charism offer to our cultures of origin? And also, what has our charism received from these cultures, how have they contributed to its vitality?

"From these encounters the charism emerges regenerated, strengthened, increased, multiplied, fruitful, colourful and more and more itself, vigorous, refined, purified, capable of giving new life and new perspectives to the Congregation.³ And today, where is our charism moving us? What new frontiers are we being called to cross? What geographical or existential peripheries are calling for the gift of compassion of the daughters and sons of Mother G rine?

Dear sisters and brothers, it is Good Friday, and the passion of the Lord seems to be prolonged with a new mourning in our community, and it is felt in our flesh and in our hearts as we experience the loss of another of our loved ones. We embrace each other in prayer and in the promise of the fullness of Life.

May the contemplation of the signs of the Risen One strengthen our faith and our hope, refresh and confirm us in the decision to set out, together with all of you, once again on the road to Galilee where He goes before us and awaits us, to make us together with Him Good

² Gnilkka Joachim, Marco, Citadella 1987

³ Sr Simona Brambilla en *Testimoni*, septiembre de 2023



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News, a proclamation of hope, reconciliation and joy; the voice of the Truth that liberates and saves ...

I would like to take advantage of this letter to share some news:

- Sr. M. Paulina Ogbonnaya's health continues to evolve favourably and she is slowly regaining mobility and autonomy. Let us continue to accompany her with our prayers and fraternal closeness.

- During the Enlarged Council we announced, as part of the celebration of this anniversary year (of reunification) the project to transfer Mother Géline's body from the **Grande Chapelle** of the Mother House in Albi to the smaller and more intimate Chapel where the sisters of the community gather daily for prayer. Following the example of St. Dominic, it seems to us a sign of the times to symbolically return Mother Géline to the heart of the place where the community lives, since many older sisters are no longer able to move to the **Grande Chapelle**.

We would have liked to experience this moment of "translation" at the end of April, on a date close to the anniversary of the birth of Mother Géline (April 22) and the feast of Saint Catherine, her and our star. However, administrative procedures have taken on a totally different dimension from that which was initially communicated to us. We sincerely hope that we will be granted permission in time for the celebration of the anniversary of the Decree of Union, on June 14, 2025.

- This anniversary coincides with the penultimate day of the pilgrimage of some of our lay sisters and brothers to the places of our Foundress and, for the occasion, we have chosen to meet for a Eucharistic celebration. To experience this event in communion you are all invited to join in through the live streaming, at 17:30 Albi time. In due time, the sisters in charge of communication will send you instructions on how to connect.

Happy and Holy Easter!

Rome, 18 April, 2025, Good Friday.



Sr. M. Viviana Sisack
Prioress General