

Resurrectionist Spirituality Center

Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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Materials for monthly day of recollection

MARCH A.D. 2010

***Fifth Principle of the Resurrectionist Spirituality:
GOD CALLS US TO CONVERSION: TO THE PASCHAL
MYSTERY OF DYING AND RISING WITH JESUS***

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Preface

With fraternal greetings I share the next installment of “Materials for the Monthly Day of Recollection”. The subject we are undertaking (“God calls us to conversion: to the paschal mystery of dying and rising with Jesus”) fits perfectly the Lent. Our Constitutions add, that “in order to rise with Christ, we need to be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and conforms us to Christ” (art. 7).

I would like to say ‘thank you’ to all the C.R. Fathers and Brothers for your collaboration and encouraging words. All comments are warmly welcomed. You can write to: cdz.rome@gmail.com. I also invite you to visit Resurrectionists’ Internet Library, which is still growing (English-language part as well!) – www.biz.xcr.pl.

With best wishes for a fruitful Lent,

Fr. Wojciech Mleczo, C.R.

Director of the Resurrectionist Spirituality Center in Rome

PART I – Morning prayers with half-hour meditation

Outline

1. Morning prayer: Morning prayer with meditation.
2. After Reading – meditation (30 min).
Text for meditation: p. 2 (as well as ready-to-print handout at the end of the materials).
3. At the end: Beatification Prayer.

Preparations needed

1. Books for The Liturgy of the Hours.
2. Meditation handout (a copy for everybody - last page of the materials contains ready-to-print handout).

Text for meditation:

“We believe that in his love the Father calls us to conversion: to personal resurrection in union with Jesus, to a new life filled with the power of his Spirit. With Jesus, we die to ourselves when we surrender our lives to the Father, renouncing anything that separates us from him. The power of the Spirit forms Christ in us, and moves us to respond with love to the Father's great love for us.” (CR's Charism Statement)

A conference by Servant of God Bogdan Jański:

“Christ proclaims the need for interior change; He calls for conversion... There is a power in man which continually urges him to seek some goal... It is precisely this force which must be given new support. We must fix within the soul a strong concern that is able to take hold of the person. When this happens, his interior conversion follows. Thus the essence of Christian rebirth is the change of one's dominant concern... But what type of concern is able to separate man from his own ego? The love of God!... This must be proclaimed to sinful man – something which he was unable to find out for himself: God loves him!... This fact found confirmation in the historical event of Jesus' coming to earth and his freely willed death for sinners... The renewing power of God's love affects all the power of the human person. This renovating power of love reaches all the faculties of the soul, and becomes their indispensable nourishment. It strengthens intelligence, imagination, and moral sensibility. This happens with the Depths of Existence from which it derives. The person

who does penance with the aim of sacrificing himself completely, discovers the Eternal One in this very act of expiation. His entire present and future become a work of reconciliation.

(B. Jański, *Under the Standard of the Risen Christ*, ed. B. Micewski CR, Rome 1978, p. 17)

Beatification Prayer

O Risen Jesus, you called Bogdan Janski, Peter Semenenko and Jerome Kajsiewicz to proclaim your unconditional love for all people and witness to the Resurrection by dying to self in order to live a new life by the power of your Spirit. Glorify your servants by the way of beatification so that the example of their lives after conversion may bring the hope of Resurrection to all who continue to struggle with sin, error and their own human weakness. Amen

PART II – Prayer meeting with conference

Outline

1. Common prayer, e.g. part of the Liturgy of the Hours (suggested: *Midday Prayer*)
2. Prayer to the Holy Spirit (e.g. song, hymn, etc.)
3. Conference – to be read by the superior or a house member
4. Distribution of meditation handouts (could be used during adoration)
5. Exposition
6. Litany of the Most Precious Blood of Christ
7. Adoration in silence (1/2 h, occasion to reflect on the conference)
8. Prayer for vocations for our Congregation
9. Song of Praise
10. Benediction
11. Antiphon to Virgin Mary (e.g. song, hymn)

Duration: app. 1 hour 15 min.

Preparations needed

1. Books for The Liturgy of the Hours
2. Printed text of the conference (pp. 6-10)
3. Everything what is needed for Exposition

Course of the meeting

- 1. Common prayer: Liturgy of the Hours (Midday Prayer).**
- 2. Prayer to the Holy Spirit (e.g. song, hymn). (Proposal:)**

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts may all be holy.

Move in me, Holy Spirit,
that my work, too, may be holy.

Attract my heart, Holy Spirit,
that I may love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,
that I may defend all that is holy.

Protect me, Holy Spirit,
that I may always be holy.

(Prayer of St. Augustine)

3. Conference:

Fifth Principle of the Resurrectionist Spirituality:
GOD CALLS US TO CONVERSION: TO THE PASCHAL
MYSTERY OF DYING AND RISING WITH JESUS

(**Notice to reader:** it would be worthy to read this text first in private as well as to pray to the Holy Spirit, that the text which will be proclaimed would find its way to the hearts, minds and will of the listeners.)

Jesus replied: I tell you solemnly, unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God: what is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.”

(John: 3:5-8)

The action of the Spirit is mysterious, beyond our comprehension and our expectations. We cannot program the Spirit. Yet the teaching of Jesus gives us certitude of some basic truths. Conversion is the personal and ongoing process by which a person accepts these truths and allows the Spirit to change his life. This rebirth in the Spirit is at the heart of spirituality and spiritual living. In this conference we wish to describe this conversion or rebirth in terms of the paschal mystery. The previous conferences examined the essential truths leading to personal conversion in light of our Resurrectionist tradition: God’s love for the person; a person’s creaturehood, tendency to evil and personal sinfulness. The open acceptance of these truths will not leave a person inert or indifferent. If their true significance is really understood and freely received, the person will be moved to action: first to open oneself to the action of God; then to love God in return and to strive to love oneself and one’s neighbour as God loves. This personal conversion will have a profound effect upon the

person's life and influence his actions and attitudes. For a Resurrectionist it means more than an inner conversion. It leads to a commitment to live in community, to work for the resurrection of society and to accept Mary as his model of this new life in the Holy Spirit. True conversion is based on TRUTH and leads a person to acts of CHARITY. "If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together" (Ep 4:15, 16).

God is the initiator and the source of power for all conversions and for the entire process of salvation. He invites the person to begin the process and supports him by his Spirit throughout it. The result of conversion, first and foremost, is that Christ lives in the person. The person freely allows the Holy Spirit to form him in the image of Christ so that gradually the person comes to freely make all decisions according to the grace of the Spirit.

By the process of personal conversion a person lives the paschal mystery. What this means is not easy to capture in words. A person's own experience and openness to the Spirit must take him beyond the ordinary significance of the words and enlighten him so that he can grasp a little of the profundity of this marvelous work of God in his life: Jesus, the Christ, has redeemed him. By his commitment to love the Father, to make him known and to promote his kingdom, Jesus willingly accepted suffering and death rather than turn from the Father. On the surface this appeared to be a defeat for Jesus and a victory for the forces of evil. In reality the opposite was true. Jesus was raised to a greater and richer life by the Father, a life in which he is supremely above suffering and death. The secret of this victory was Jesus' total surrender to the will of the Father guided by the Spirit. What is even more amazing is that the victory was not for Jesus alone, but for all who open themselves to the guidance of the same Spirit in order to have this same action continued in their lives.

The paschal mystery centers on Jesus, but is not confined to his historical life. Nor is it something which happened once in history with the effects trickling down through time. The new life of Jesus transcends time and space. He is able to continue his offering of himself to the Father even as he enjoys the victory granted to him by the Father. This continued offering and victory is celebrated, first and foremost, in the Eucharistic sacrament.

This sacrament, like the others, brings the participant into the paschal mystery. To celebrate a sacrament signifies that the person acknowledges Christ's continued action in reference to the Father and also that he wishes Christ to continue his saving paschal activity in his own life. This saving activity, although celebrated in the sacraments, occurs also apart from the sacraments whenever a person freely cooperates with the Spirit to die to himself in order to have the Father's kingdom come into existence. At these times Jesus acts in and through the person so as to incorporate the person's action into his own giving of himself to his Father. In turn, the person shares in the new life of the Spirit that Jesus receives from the Father. St. Paul refers to this unity with Christ through suffering and self-giving, which is at the heart of the paschal mystery, as making up "all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1 :24; cf. also *Constit.*, 80).

The paschal mystery or process of conversion involves dying and penance as well as celebration and glorification. There is a tendency to stress only one or the other, or to forget that the latter results only from the former. Generally people who live in more affluent countries will need to be reminded of the call to share in the Lord's suffering and death. People who live in poorer countries might need to be reminded more about the hope and joy of the resurrection since suffering is so much a part of their daily experience.

If in the past Catholic practices focused too much on penance and suffering, it is also true that since the Second Vatican Council there has been such an emphasis on hope, joy and glorification that at times the basis for these virtues has been lost. Christian hope, joy and glorification of the person are not founded on human strength, talent or initiative, but rather on the presence of the Spirit within us. The Spirit does not remove mortification and suffering from human life. In fact, mortification and suffering are frequently the very means used by the Spirit to enter more deeply into a person's life. Without them the person is too caught up in himself and the material world to recognize the promptings of the Spirit to respond to God's love. Mortification is often the necessary means which assist a person to attain the internal dispositions necessary for the Spirit to be heard.

From the above it is clear that the conversion involved in living the paschal mystery comprises a death with all its pain and anxiety. It also involves new life, putting on “the new self that has been created in God’s way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth” (Ep 4:24). One’s focus must always be on this new life, especially in the midst of the dying to self, in order to prevent discouragement or the making of suffering into an end instead of a means.

The baptismal commitment is intended to move a person away from that which is evil, away from whatever prohibits God’s presence, toward what allows the Spirit to operate in him. Baptism is meant to signal a person’s desire to renounce sin and all its consequences. Since these consequences are already present in his life, it requires a death to part of his person and an acceptance of a new life. The commitment of religious profession involves the same dynamic in a new way. The religious desires to live for the Father in union with Jesus not only by dying to sin, but also by freely renouncing things that are morally good and beneficial. His desire for new life motivates him to choose not merely a good life but a radical style of Christian life. It is radical in the sense that it goes beyond what is required by one’s baptismal commitment. The religious freely chooses to take upon himself an “extreme” life style in order to give expression to his appreciation of God’s love, and his own passionate response to that love. He has discovered a treasure of great value for which he freely sacrifices other treasures.

It is in the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience that a religious finds his primary identity as a religious. Neither his apostolate, nor his community life, nor his practices of prayer are adequate in this regard. The apostolates a religious performs might be able to be accomplished as well professionally by a lay person or by a diocesan priest. If a religious finds his identity primarily in his apostolate he faces several dangers. He can become disillusioned when the vows make demands for which he has not prepared himself, with the result that he departs religious life, or settles for mediocrity, or becomes blind to his abuses in living out the vows. If his identity is tied exclusively to his apostolate, he may guard his apostolic position jealously and deny lay persons a just and required participation in

the life of the Church. A religious who finds his identity in community life will tend to exaggerate the importance of particular community practices or may be easily threatened by the visits of laity to community houses or at community events. He might also place unrealistic expectations on community and become angry and disillusioned when these expectations are not met.

The religious life is based on a relationship with Jesus who expresses the limitless love of God for us. Thus a religious chooses to live the vows because of Jesus; he chooses to model his life on the paschal mystery because Jesus did so. His identity is tied to his relationship of faith, hope and love with Jesus expressed through chastity, poverty and obedience (cf. *Constit.*, 12 and 13). The vowed life can be an act of faith through which a religious can proclaim that Jesus is the centre of his life, more important than any other person or object. It can be an act of hope when the religious sets aside other securities and expects God to be his security and ultimate source of fulfillment. It can also be an act of love through which the religious expresses his desire to offer the Risen Lord all that he has, does and is.

Living the vows is a paschal experience, a conversion experience, because the religious has freely chosen to renounce one style of living the Christian life in order to live another that expresses faith, hope and love more immediately and more strongly. The religious is not satisfied with striving for virtue as challenged by the vicissitudes of secular life, but decides to put himself directly under the demands of the religious vows. He publicly surrenders his natural right to an exclusive marital relationship and parenthood, to independently possess and freely use material things, and to his personal autonomy. These real and painful renunciations are made in order to make space in his life for the invisible presence of God. For someone to make these renunciations without faith is absurd, since they involve good things which contribute greatly to a person's fulfillment and happiness. When someone with a religious call makes these renunciations they become meaningful acts since they are symbolic actions which express how real Jesus is to him and how important is his relationship with Jesus (cf. *Constit.*, 14). These concrete symbolic actions in turn support and nourish the relationship.

The religious anticipates this final act of renunciation when through his vows he freely surrenders family, possessions and self. His life is to be a witness that Jesus offers happiness and fulfillment through the new life of grace. The life of the religious is intended to proclaim to others that they do not have to be afraid to let go of the goods of this world when the Lord asks them to make this act of surrender. Religious vows proclaim that Jesus offers higher goods to those who surrender the goods of this world, namely himself, his peace and joy, his Spirit, and eternal life. This is the prophetic character of religious life (cf. *Constit.*, 15).

Text taken from:
International Formation Commission,
Formation in Resurrectionist Spirituality,
Rome 1993, pp. 47-55.

4. Distribution of pages with points to reflect on

(Notice: After the conference reflection points should be distributed. They can be printed in needed amounts using the ready-to-print handouts, located at the end of the materials).

Points to reflect on after listening to the conference (to use e.g. during adoration)

WHY I RETURNED TO THE HOLY CATHOLIC FAITH

Because, O merciful God, this was your wish! Your grace accomplished this, not any merit, work or reasoning of mine. I feel this in the depths of my soul, and thank you, O God, for deigning to look upon my misery and suffering, on my groaning, and my longing for the truth, for universal good. Come to my assistance, Almighty Lord! Grant me the strength to remain worthy of your kindness for the rest of my life.

(Bogdan Jański, 28th December 1834)

1. “Jesus replied: I tell you solemnly, unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God: what is born of the flesh is flesh; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.” (John: 3:5-8)

2. “Our conversion is a dynamic, lifelong process. We must constantly die to self (self-will, self-love, self-activity) in order to rise by the power of the Holy Spirit to a new life of love in Christ.” (CR’s Const., art. 1)

5. Exposition. Eucharistic Hymn.

6. Litany of the Most Precious Blood of Christ.

Lord, have mercy - *Lord, have mercy*

Christ, have mercy - *Christ, have mercy*

Lord, have mercy - *Lord, have mercy*

Christ hear us - *Christ hear us*

Christ, graciously hear us - *Christ, graciously hear us*

God, the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God, the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, One God,

Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, **SAVE US.**

Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God,

Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament,

Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony,

Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging,

Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns,

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross,

Blood of Christ, price of our salvation,

Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness,

Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls,

Blood of Christ, stream of mercy,

Blood of Christ, victor over demons,

Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs,

Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors,

Blood of Christ, bringing forth Virgins,

Blood of Christ, help of those in peril,

Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened,

Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow,

Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent,

Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying,

Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts,

Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life,

Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory,

Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor,

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,

spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,

graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,

have mercy on us.

V. You have redeemed us, O Lord, in your Blood.

R. And made us, for our God, a kingdom.

Let us pray.

Almighty and Eternal God, you have appointed your only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world, and willed to be appeased by His Blood. Grant we beg of You, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation, and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life, so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

7. Half-hour adoration in silence.

8. Prayer for vocations to our Congregation:

Lord we are deeply aware of your words to your disciples:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,
therefore ask the Lord of the harvest
to send laborers into his harvest” (Mt. 9:37).

We ask you at this time when we, your laborers,
are fewer and the harvest is more plentiful,
to inspire through your Holy Spirit
the men to whom you are calling to join
us in the Congregation of the Resurrection.

Also Lord inspire us, your present laborers,
to live out our charism and mission with the enthusiasm and joy

which will attract new laborers.

We make this prayer in your name

our Risen Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

9. Song of Praise.

10. Benediction and Reposition.

11. Antiphon to Virgin Mary.

PART III – House meeting

Outline

1. Prayer.
2. Discuss and establish date for monthly day of recollection in April.
3. How are we going to celebrate the Easter?

“We will proclaim the paschal mystery by careful prepared celebrations of the Easter Triduum and every Sunday as the day of the Risen Lord.” (Const., art. 1)

“The entire Community is also encouraged to offer special thanks to God on either Easter Monday or March 27th.” (Const., art. 79).

4. Current issues.
5. “Resurrection Prayer”.
6. At the end superior will bless the community.

Preparations Needed:

1. Coffee, tea, cookies, fruit, etc.
2. List of discussion points / agenda.

Monthly Day of Recollection – MARCH A.D. 2010

Our monthly day of recollection
will take place on March 2010.



***Topic: Fifth Principle of Resurrectionist Spirituality –
God calls us to conversion: to the Paschal Mystery
of dying and rising with Jesus.***

I. Morning prayer with meditation:

time: place:

II. Prayer meeting with conference:

time: place:

III. House meeting:

time: place:

OUR DUTIES,

who is responsible for:

Morning prayer with meditation	
Leading the Liturgy of the Hours	
Conference will be read by	
Exposition of Eucharist + prayers during exposition	
Preparation of place for house meeting	

Points for morning meditation

Monthly day of recollection: March 2010

God calls us to conversion: to the Paschal Mystery of dying and rising with Jesus

“We believe that in his love the Father calls us to conversion: to personal resurrection in union with Jesus, to a new life filled with the power of his Spirit. With Jesus, we die to ourselves when we surrender our lives to the Father, renouncing anything that separates us from him. The power of the Spirit forms Christ in us, and moves us to respond with love to the Father's great love for us.”
(CR's Charism Statement)

A conference by Servant of God B. Jański:

“Christ proclaims the need for interior change; He calls for conversion... There is a power in man which continually urges him to seek some goal... It is precisely this force which must be given new support. We must fix within the soul a strong concern that is able to take hold of the person. When this happens, his interior conversion follows. Thus the essence of Christian rebirth is the change of one's dominant concern... But what type of concern is able to separate man from his own ego? The love of God!... This must be proclaimed to sinful man – something which he was unable to find out for himself: God loves him!... This fact found confirmation in the historical event of Jesus' coming to earth and his freely willed death for sinners... The renewing power of God's love affects all the power of the human person. This renovating power of love reaches all the faculties of the soul, and becomes their indispensable nourishment. It strengthens intelligence, imagination, and moral sensibility. This happens with the Depths of Existence from which it derives. The person who does penance with the aim of sacrificing himself completely, discovers the Eternal One in this very act of expiation. His entire present and future become a work of reconciliation.

(B. Jański, *Under the Standard of the Risen Christ*, ed. B. Micewski CR, Rome 1978, p. 17).

Points for morning meditation

Monthly day of recollection: March 2010

God calls us to conversion: to the Paschal Mystery of dying and rising with Jesus

“We believe that in his love the Father calls us to conversion: to personal resurrection in union with Jesus, to a new life filled with the power of his Spirit. With Jesus, we die to ourselves when we surrender our lives to the Father, renouncing anything that separates us from him. The power of the Spirit forms Christ in us, and moves us to respond with love to the Father's great love for us.”
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Points to reflect on after listening to the conference

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(Bogdan Jański, 28th December 1834)

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(John: 3:5-8)

2. *“Our conversion is a dynamic, lifelong process. We must constantly die to self (self-will, self-love, self-activity) in order to rise by the power of the Holy Spirit to a new life of love in Christ.”*

(CR’s Constitutions, art. 1)

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