

## THE VOCATION OF PROCLAMATION

by Bro FRANCESCO DILEO OFMCap

**A** month for reflection and nurturing hope. This year March will not only lead us to experience the last part of Lent, Palm Sunday, and the Holy Week, but it will end precisely with the triduum of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. What lies ahead of us, therefore, will be a time of grace, a fitting occasion (*kairos*) that will immerse us, through faith, in the great mystery of our salvation, which was accomplished almost two thousand years ago in that Holy Land, today once again shaken by fear, violence, and death. The relentless continuation of two cruel and devastating wars - which emerge in the media alongside the numerous others that nevertheless sow mourning, terror, and violence in various impoverished areas of the world - has brought to the attention of public opinion two realities that the current cultural context tries to hide because it cannot accept them and understand their meaning: suffering and death. At the same time, the risk that what Pope Francis has repeatedly called "a third world war fought piecemeal" may turn "into a real global conflict," with weapons capable of destroying humanity in a few moments, has generated and fuelled a widespread

sense of fear. In practice, all the fragility of those who have an immature faith or have not yet accepted this divine gift has come to the surface.


It is precisely the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus that have given meaning, value, and a new perspective to the pain of every man and to the inevitable end of our earthly journey. It is precisely the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus that constitute the foundations of the faith we profess.

All this imposes on us believers the obligation of proclamation. Especially of the Easter proclamation. We have the duty to remind humanity of the third millennium that Christ has transformed suffering into the highest, authentic, and credible declaration of love and that His resurrection has forever defeated death and has opened to us the doors of eternity. We must repeat, insist without getting tired, and, if necessary, shout, to bring the Word of salvation to those who do not listen or do not want to listen, because they are distracted or too focused on cheap momentary happiness. We must shake up and awaken the dormant faith of many Christians who cannot choose between God and the subtle seductions of the world.

It is an act of charity towards many of our brothers and sis-



ters, oppressed by the weight of moral misery, that leads to the degradation of their own dignity and endless unhappiness. And it is not a task reserved for consecrated persons, bishops, priests, deacons, religious men, and women. It is a vocation that challenges every Christian, because, as Pope Francis wrote in the Message for the 97th World Mission Day, "today more than ever humanity, wounded by so many injustices, divisions, and wars, needs the Good News of peace and salvation in Christ. I therefore take this opportunity to reaffirm that everyone has the right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim it without excluding anyone, not as those who impose a new obligation, but as those who share a joy, signal a beautiful horizon, offer a desirable banquet."

With this exhortation, which recalls us to the commitments arising from the *following of Christ*, I wish each reader of the Voice of Padre Pio to live the coming holy days in contemplation of the paschal mystery, which has once again become "visible" to the men of our time in the body and life of St. Pio of Pietrelcina. 

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