



Archbishop of Montreal

Homilie
Saturday, April 11, 2020

Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter - Year A (Mt 28:1-10)

Let us learn to hope.

Have you ever experienced what the night is? The night of your room, the night of the city, the night of the forest? What do we do when we are in the night? What do we do when we want to walk in the night? We look for light because without a light, it is dangerous to go too far. It may even be better not to move. However, with a light, no matter how small, we can move forward, in the light of a flashlight, the light of the moon, the light of the starry sky, the light of a flame or a torch.

The light does not make the night disappear, but it allows us to walk through the night and arrive safely. It lets us go where we want to go. Making an analogy with the current time, we can say that in an astonishing and mysterious way, all of humanity finds itself in the darkness of the night. It is the night of the pandemic, it is the night of COVID-19, and we search for a light of any kind. We are looking for a light so that we can move forward.

We could talk more of the light of the human spirit which, thanks to science, seeks and finds solutions. We could also speak of the light of the human soul that seeks the path of solidarity.

But before it all is the light of God. The light of God enlightens us, a little bit like a flame. What does a flame do? A flame enlightens us. But a flame also warms us! It can be cold in the middle of the night. In this case, we are not only looking for light but also for warmth.

The light of God is a light that has the power to warm and to enlighten.

Tonight, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We celebrate the life that nothing could stop, we celebrate a death that nothing could stop. Certainly, death is powerful. Certainly, suffering is powerful, but the life of God is even more powerful. God's love is even more powerful.

Nothing could stop Jesus Christ from rising again. Nothing. Since nothing could prevent Jesus Christ from rising again, nothing can prevent Jesus Christ from coming to us, knocking on the door of our heart and offering us his warmth and his light.

Jesus Christ has the power to comfort us, no matter how lonely we are, no matter how isolated we are, no matter what economic uncertainty we face in our future. The light of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ resurrected who is light, has the power to warm our heart, no matter what sorrow we bear at the loss of a loved one. I repeat: the risen Jesus Christ has the power to comfort our heart, to give peace to our heart, to give strength to our heart.

He also has the power to enlighten us. How do we move forward? What can I do to get closer to my parents, my grandfather, or my grandmother who are alone? What can I do to be close to those who are sick? What can I do to keep up the fight if I am in a hospital working as a doctor,

a nurse, or an auxiliary nurse? If I do not know whether I will survive because I am constantly exposed to this wretched virus? What can I do?

In addition to giving us inner peace, the light of Jesus Christ also has the power to enlighten us. It has the power to guide us in our actions and in our words. It guides us even when we do not know how long the night will last. This in itself, not knowing how long the night will last is part of the mystery of the night. When it is night and we know that the day is coming, all we do is simply wait until the sun rises.

Today, we have sunk into a strange night, towards the bottom. We do not know how long the night of this sickness will last, this night of the pandemic that now confronts us. In this special time, let us remember that the light of Christ has the power to guide us. It can support and accompany us, whatever night surrounds us, for however long the night might last. Jesus Christ is the light in the night that we need.

Even when a light in the night seems fragile, it still illuminates. Even when a light in the night seems very weak, it is enough to guide the next step. And the light of Jesus Christ is a powerful light. No darkness can prevent it. All it depends on is whether our heart is open, on whether our heart is open to him, on whether we choose to open our heart to him.

Through his warmth and his light, Jesus Christ enables us to recognize our vulnerability. It is not easy to face our weakness! Sometimes, when we let ourselves be taken up by our activism, when we are in the heat of the moment, we forget our weakness.

In the light of the night, the night of this pandemic, we are confronted with our weakness: our personal weakness, family weakness, and social weakness. We are frightened when confronted with our own vulnerabilities and weaknesses. But the light of Jesus Christ is also warmth. It is a light that enlightens, it is a divine light that gives warmth.

By its warmth, the light of Jesus Christ comes to help us see our weakness, it comes to help free us from the fear of seeing our weakness. For this light comes to tell us that Jesus Christ is with us, that the love of God leans towards us, that Jesus Christ is at our side, and that the divine love accompanies us and goes before us towards the fulfillment of eternal life.

With Jesus Christ, we are invited not to fear recognizing our weaknesses and limitations. Quite the opposite!

In confronting our weaknesses and limits, we recognize that we need each other. Just as we need God, we need each other. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, we think we can do everything alone.

During this pandemic, we have at the very least learned that we can do nothing if we stay alone. We cannot confront it without the help of others. We need the help of God, but we also need the help of others. This help can come from family members, our society, our religious movements, and our organizations.

Alone, we can do nothing, and we need the help of others. Be not afraid of saying 'yes' to the weakness of not being sufficient in yourself. Be not afraid of saying 'yes' to the weakness of not being self-sufficient. The light of Jesus Christ allows us recognize our weakness, as he offers himself to our hearts and comes to open them.

Our weakness is now like a wound that transforms us, a happy wound in a manner of speaking. It is like a wound through which the light of Jesus Christ can enter into us. It is like a crack in a wall that lets in the light. This wound therefore becomes a crack in our heart that lets in the divine light.

In this night, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ that nothing could stop. In this night, when we celebrate the light of Jesus Christ that no other light can overcome, no dark-ness can overcome, let us open our hearts to his light. Let him tell us of his love, let him tell us of his compassion, let him tell us of his presence, let him tell us of his salvation, let him tell us of his life. Let him tell us that the life of God is stronger than all nights, that the life of God is stronger than all deaths. Let us be guided by Jesus Christ on a path of prayer, a path of solidarity with each other, and on a path of hope.

Together, let us learn to hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Christian Lépine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

† Christian Lépine
Archbishop of Montreal