



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN  
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*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## A formula to counter an exasperated Consumerism?



The Lenten period quickly propels us towards Easter, and it is always the most extraordinary occasion to relive the mystery of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection in an ever new way. This means standing, better still walking, in the footsteps of Jesus, not so much for emotional reasons, but in order to comprehend the sense of all that which the Christian faith means by this period of reflection and prayer. To do so, we need to accompany the Lord in his final moments, like those 'friends', men and women, who did not abandon him, who indeed shared in the last and most significant moments.

In fact, liturgically speaking through Lent, the Christian relives the redemptive mystery of Jesus by spiritually following his steps .

So, let this short Gospel story from the evangelist Matthew introduce us :

*"As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up." (Mt 20:17-19)*

We can listen to these words either as indifferent spectators, or with the amazement of the disciples who, in truth, did not immediately understand their meaning. Peter, in fact, will try to disabuse Jesus of that rather strange idea of death; the others were debating among themselves supposing they were heading Jerusalem, the place of religious and political power, to finally see the manifestation of the 'Kingdom of God', of which they had heard, imagining that they would become the main actors.

Then Jesus brought them back to reality, to the true meaning of his words, namely that he had come *"to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* (Mt 20:28). But even with these words, what did Jesus mean? Did the disciples, who had followed the Master from the beginning of his public life, really need to be involved in the mystery of death and resurrection to fully understand its meaning? No less do we need patient listening and an open heart to understand and believe, passing through the bewilderment of that unjust condemnation of the Lord and the painful and dramatic death on the cross.

Another thought comes to mind: was it really necessary for Christ to go through his passion?

Yes! It was necessary, because it was the moment when he took upon himself the whole of human history, drinking its bitter "cup" to the very end (cf. Mk 14:36).

Let us consider some of the events of humanity with which Jesus himself was confronted in life: from the absurd slaughter of the innocent children in Bethlehem to the despair of their families; from the persecution of the corrupt Herod, who had John beheaded in prison, to the unhappy life of the marginalized lepers; from the blind reduced to begging, to the deaf prevented from social relations; from the hopeless slaves to the suffering children; from the human beings tormented by evil spirits to the poor, and so on, up to the hypocritical religiosity even towards God, when he recalled: *"These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me"* (Is 29:13, Mk 7:6). On the cross, all the dramatic and heavy realities of human life were taken upon Himself by Christ. Are these not still the same heavy realities of our life today? Or our era?

Then we must also go beyond the cross, to the sepulchre, where He will lay down all the evils of mankind awaiting God's judgement, while the Father had given his own Son a new life, a life "other".

In his last Supper, before he died, Jesus wanted to renew the meaning of the new Easter; this is why he washed the disciples' feet by bending before them and taking away the weariness of their walking with him, he gives them a 'bread' and a 'wine' so that their strength would not fail on the path of the new faith, he teaches them the prayer not to give in to temptations and ensures his presence to accompany the Church still today.

Is not our spirituality still in need of a Lenten journey and is it not perhaps a renewed formula against the exasperated consumerism that robs us of peace and dignity?

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