

During Holy Week, we relive unforgettable and truly historic days.

This week is the most precious week of the year and, even if I wanted to say only a few things about these days, I would have to write very much...

But, together with you, I would like to reflect on just two events that fill my heart with gratitude to Jesus, and it will be the same for you.

Good Friday reminds us that Jesus died.

What a gift the death of Jesus was for us, Gen!

When that hour comes for you too, however sad it is it will be made less so by a thought: Jesus died too! So I am not alone; there are two of us.

And we'll wonder: but Jesus, how did your Love get to that point? You knew that death was a difficult passage so you went through it first; and it almost seems that turning back to us, you say: "Come on, you too can take my hand and come into true life, the one that will never end."

Above my bed hangs a copy of one of Michelangelo's works: it shows Jesus taken down from the cross, held in Mary's arms. I often look at this dead Jesus and say, "Thank you, Jesus, thank you! You did everything for us. You gave your life for your people!"

Then there is another extraordinary event: Easter, the resurrection!

Oh, Gen! How can I adequately explain this other aspect of Jesus' life?

He died, yes, but he is risen. His body did not stay long in the tomb. He rose from the dead!

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, our own bodies would not rise either.

So then, where would this Paradise be that we always imagine, the kingdom of happiness we build a little at a time by living our Ideal (which is to love God in His will and love our neighbour with sacrifices and sorrows offered with joy, as much as we can)?

Paradise exists and we will go there, once cleansed, with our bodies too because Jesus is risen.

But tell me, Gen, considering what I have been saying, don't you think our love for Jesus is petty and small and so inadequate compared to what he has given us?

The first time we go to church, let's tell him how grateful we are and that we know no one has ever loved us like he did, and that he alone has the right to be king of our hearts.

Bye, Gen! And so that words can become facts, let's remain in our secret: Jesus Forsaken.

Chiara Lubich 19th February 1978

Jesus wants us to be joyful always, in the fullness of joy in fact. But in order to fulfil this will of His, we need to know how to deal with suffering, which never fails in life.

(...) I am thinking, of course, of the importance of embracing the cross immediately, or, as we say, Jesus forsaken, so as to be always joyful.

Joy is the uniform of a true Christian, it witnesses to a soul that lives Christianity.

But the cross is necessary. Jesus said so: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." By shouldering it well, however, it will become light and enable us to be happy.

Today, many young people are seeking happiness, but they take the wrong path and their searching leads only to bitterness. We must spread Christian joy generously around us, the joy that comes from embracing suffering. This is what I wanted to tell you, Gen. This is what I am thinking of: our responsibility to love the cross well, to love Jesus Forsaken.

And may he fill you with joy.

Chiara Lubich January 1979