

### **Get up and do not be afraid. (Mt 17:7)**

Jesus climbed a high mountain with Peter, James and John and, from there, the disciples saw the glory of their Master and heard the voice of the Father who recognised him as his son.

This was an extraordinary experience; being face to face with God allowed his creatures to know him in his splendour. The disciples were afraid and fell to the ground, but Jesus touched them and said,

### **Get up and do not be afraid.**

The verb 'to get up' is the same one often used in the Gospel in reference to the Resurrection, just as 'do not be afraid' are the first words that the Risen Lord addressed to the women at the empty tomb after having greeted them. <sup>i</sup> Jesus' strong and clear words on this occasion are a decisive invitation to enter into a new life which the disciples were able to experience through the touch of his hand.

We too are sometimes held back by our fears and weighed down by life's trials and situations that seem to have no solution. When this happens, we cannot rely solely on our own strength if we want to rediscover the enthusiasm and momentum of witnessing to our faith. Instead, we should depend on the grace of God who always goes before us.

*"Who does not go through trials in life? They take the form of failure, poverty, depression, doubt or temptation ... Furthermore, the materialistic and individualistic society that surrounds us, with its wars, violence and injustices is also frightening... Faced with these situations, doubt can creep in and we may ask ourselves, 'Where has God's love gone?' ... Jesus truly entered into every painful situation and took all our trials upon himself ... He is Love, and it is love that drives out all fear. Every time we are assailed by fear or suffocated by pain, we can recognise the true reality hidden within it: it is Jesus who is present ... Let us allow him to enter our lives. And then let us continue to live as God wants us to do by focusing upon loving our neighbour.*

*We will discover that Jesus is always Love. We will then be able to say to him, just as the disciples did, 'You are truly the Son of God.' (Mt 14:33)". <sup>ii</sup>*

### **Get up and do not be afraid.**

Those who have experienced God in their lives have been captivated by his presence, touched and healed by his Word. Sometimes, the witness of a Christian community accompanies us on this divine adventure and gives us the

courage to get up again, to step outside ourselves and resume our journey with Jesus and with our brothers and sisters.

Let us read the testimony of a young Syrian woman:

"At the end of last year, my country went through a very difficult time. My city was hit by a wave of chaos and fear. I was deeply concerned for my family, my friends and myself. In the midst of so much uncertainty, I tried to remain steadfast in my hope in God and to stay strong despite everything that was happening. Before these events, the young people with whom I am committed to living the Gospel had planned some projects to support families in need by preparing food parcels and organising various initiatives.

But the situation forced us to temporarily suspend all activities. After a few days, we managed to get together and, at that meeting, we found strength and courage in one another. We decided not to let fear overwhelm us, but to put our trust in Jesus and continue on the path we had begun. Thanks to the faith we shared among us, we were able to help more than forty families who were in real need of support. In the midst of those difficulties, we felt that, thanks to God's love and our unity, we could really make a difference."

### **Get up and do not be afraid.**

After climbing the mountain with Jesus to meet God and hear his voice, we can also descend with him, to "return to the plain, where we meet so many brothers and sisters weighed down by fatigue, illness, injustice, ignorance, poverty both material and spiritual." <sup>iii</sup>

Even as a Christian community, we may suffer and feel lost, but this Word urges us to set out together, to bring to everyone "the fruits of that experience with God by sharing the graces we have received." <sup>iv</sup>

Prepared by Letizia Magri & the Word of Life Team.

iMt. 28:10, cf. 28:5  
iiC. Lubich Word of Life, Aug 2002  
iiiPope Francis, Angelus 16 March 2014  
ivIbid