

Way of Light

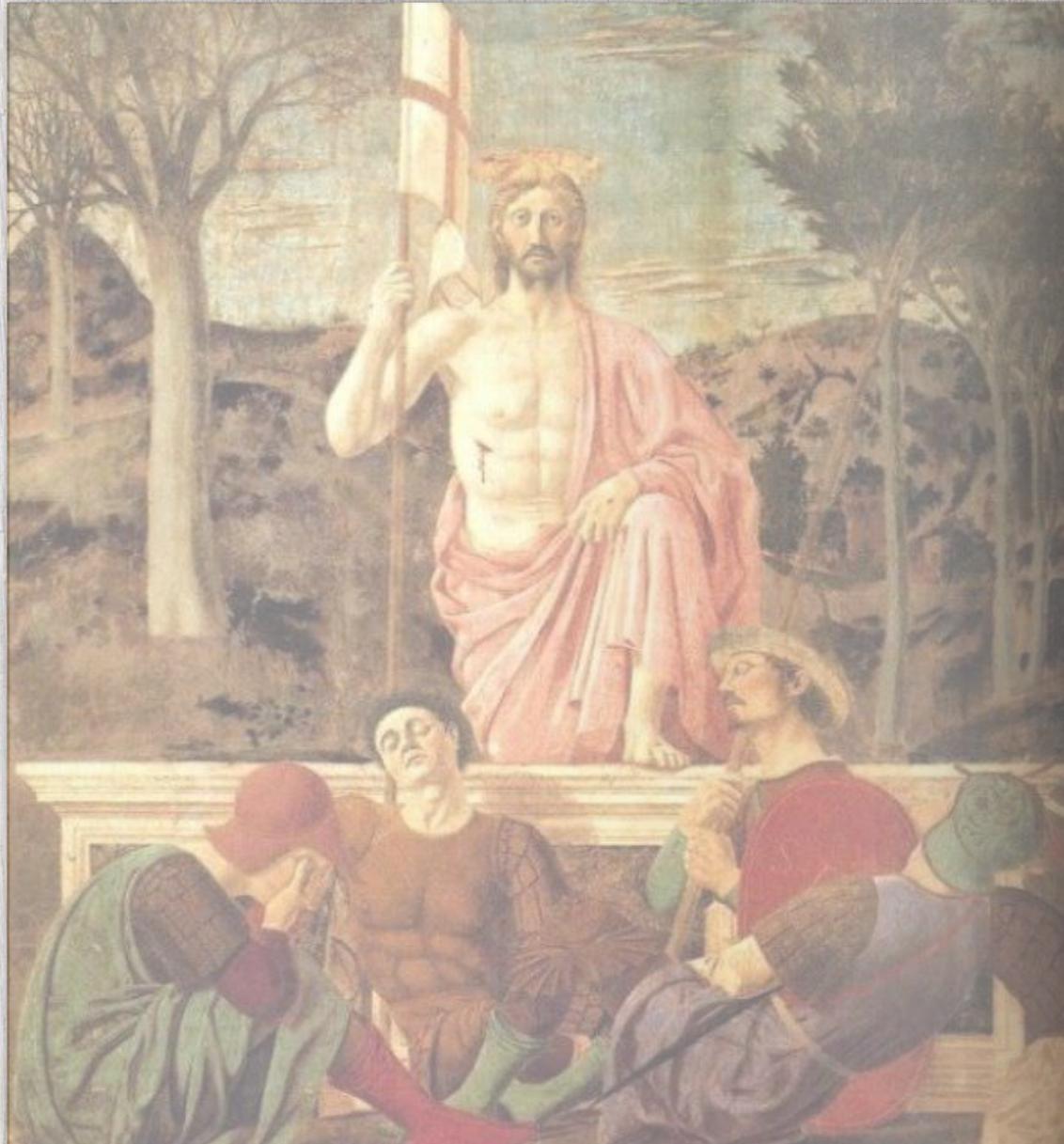
*with meditations by
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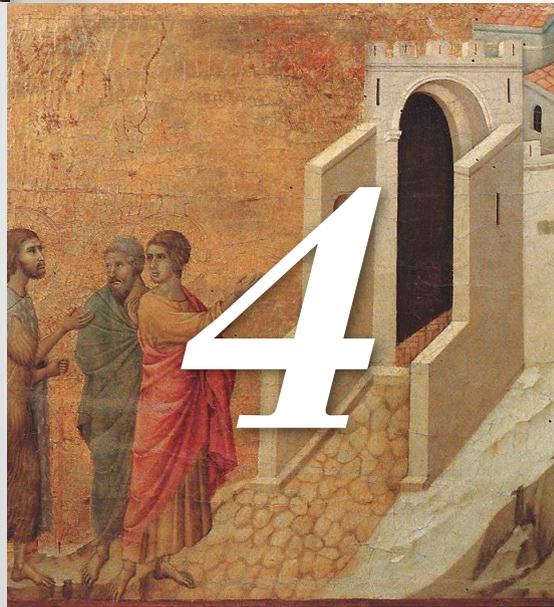
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13

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14

*Victimae paschali laudes
immolent Christiani.*

Agnus redemit oves:

*Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.*

*Mors et vita duello
confluxere mirando:
dux vitae mortuus,
regnat vivus.*

*Dic nobis Maria,
quid vidisti in via?*

*Sepulcrum Christi viventis,
et gloriam vidi resurgentis
Angelicos testes,
sudarium, et vestes.*

*Surrexit Christus spes mea:
praecedet suos in Galilaeam.*

*Scimus Christum surrexisse
a mortuis vere:*

tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.



Jesus is raised from the dead

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Anastasis, chiesa di San Salvatore,
Chora (Turchia), inizi del secolo XIV.



Alleluia

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”
(Mt 28:5-7)

Devotion [= making the Risen Jesus present in our lives!] in no way spoils anything if it be true, rather it makes everything perfect. When it conflicts with any person's legitimate occupation, it is without doubt false. “The bee” says Aristotle, “sucks honey from flowers without damaging them,” leaving them as whole and as fresh as it found them. But true devotion does even better. Not only does it not spoil any sort of life-situation or occupation, but on the contrary enriches it and makes it attractive... Devotion makes the care of the family peaceful, the love of husband and wife more sincere, the service of the ruler more loyal, and every sort of occupation more pleasant and more loveable... It is an error, or rather, a heresy, to try to exclude the devout life from the soldiers' regiment, the workmen's shop, the court of rulers or the home of the married.



The disciples find the empty sepulchre

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Eugène Burnand. La
corsa dei discepoli
Pietro a Giovanni al
sepolcro (1898)

2

Alleluia



They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; 5 and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed
(Jn 20:4-8)

Blind persons do not see a prince who is among them. If they are told of his presence, they behave with respect. But, in fact, since they do not see him, they easily forget his presence. Having forgotten it, they more easily lose respect and reverence. Alas, Philothea, we do not see God who is present with us. Though faith reminds us of his presence, since we do not see him with our eyes, we very often forget and behave as though God was very far from us.



The Risen Lord appears to Mary Magdalene

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



"Noli me tangere", Giotto,
Cappella degli Scrovegni,
Padova, 1303-1305.

3

Alleluia



Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic,[b] "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"
(Jn 20:15-17)

What are the flowers of our heart, Philothea? Our Good desires, certainly. As soon as they appear, we should get hold of a pruning knife to cut off from our conscience every deed that is useless and irrelevant. In order to marry an Israelite, a girl who was a foreigner had to take off the garment she was wearing as a captive, trim her nails and shave her head. So whoever seeks the honour of being a spouse of Christ has to strip off the old self and be clothed in the new, giving up sin and then trimming and cutting away all sorts of obstructions which lead away from the love of God.... The usual purification and healing, of the body as well as of the spirit, takes place only little by little, by gradual progress, by constant improvement, with effort and over a period of time.



Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Duccio di Buoninsegna,
Cristo ad Emmaus, (1308-
1311), Museo dell'Opera
Metropolitana del Duomo
(Siena).

4

Alleluia



“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” [...] And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
(Lk 24:18-19,25-27)

Devotion [= God's love received and given] is to be practised differently by the nobleman, the workman, the servant, the prince, the widow, the young girl, the wife. Even more than this, the practice of devotion has to be adapted to the strength, life-situation and duties of each individual... No matter where we are, we can and we should seek a life of perfection.



Jesus is known in the breaking of the bread

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Cena in Emmaus (1648),
Rembrandt (Musée du
Louvre).

5

Alleluia

‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us[k] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem.

(Lk 24:29-33)

The glass of a mirror would not catch our reflection if its back were not covered with tin or lead. Similarly, we could not easily contemplate God in this world if the Divinity were not united to the sacred humanity of the Saviour. His life and death are the most suitable, appealing, delightful and fruitful subjects that we can take for our ordinary meditation.

The Saviour calls himself, not without reason, the bread come down from heaven. As bread should be eaten with all sorts of food, so also the Saviour should be meditated on, considered and searched for in all our prayers and actions.





Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Cristo risorto nel Cenacolo, circa 1670. Mattia Pretti, Museo de Bellas Artes, Siviglia.

6

Alleluia



‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

(Lk 24:29-33)

In the same way, my dear Philothea, the world defames holy devotion as much as it can. It represents devout persons with faces that are dissatisfied, sad and sulky. It proclaims that devotion makes people depressed and unbearable. But Joshua and Caleb insisted that the Promised Land was good and beautiful, and also that possessing it would be delightful and pleasant. So also the Holy Spirit assures us, through the words of all the Saints, and our Lord by his own teaching, that the devout life is pleasant, happy and lovable.

◀ Jesus gives the disciples the authority to forgive sins

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



L'Apparizione di Cristo
durante la cena degli
apostoli. Duccio di
Buoninsegna (1308-1311).
Museo dell'Opera
Metropolitana del Duomo
(Siena).

7

Alleluia

➔ Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

(Jn 20:19-23)

Another considers himself devout because of the very great number of prayers he recites every day, even though soon after this he speaks words that are annoying, full of pride and hurtful to those in his house and to his neighbours. Another very gladly opens his purse to give alms to the poor but cannot take any gentleness from his heart to forgive his enemies. Yet another will forgive his enemies but will not pay what he owes unless he is legally forced to do so.



Jesus strengthens the faith of Thomas

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Incredulità di san Tommaso, Caravaggio (1600-1601), Bildergalerie de Potsdam.

8

Alleluia



'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

(Jn 20:25-29)

What good do we have that we have not received? If we have received then why are we proud (1 Cor. 4:7)? On the contrary, a lively consideration of the graces received makes us humble, for recognition of them begets gratitude [...]

Let us never lower our eyes without humbling our hearts. Let us not make a show of wanting to be the last unless we really wish it.



Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Cristo sul mare di Galilea
Tintoretto (1575-1580),
National Gallery of Art,
Washington.

9

Alleluia



“Children, do you have any fish?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” [...] Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”
(Jn 21:5-6,11)

*Which of the two I pray you loved God more, the theologian Occam, held by some to be the most subtle of mortals, or S. Catherine of Genoa, an unlearned woman? He knew God better by science, she by experience; and her experience conducted her deep into seraphic love, while he with his knowledge remained far remote from this excellent perfection.
knowledge is not of itself contrary, but very useful to devotion, and meeting together they marvellously assist one another; though it often happens through our misery that knowledge hinders the birth of devotion, because knowledge puffs up (1 Cor 8:1) and makes us proud, and pride, which is contrary to every virtue, is the total ruin of devotion.*



Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Consegna delle chiavi
- Pietro Perugino
(1481-1482),
Cappella Sistina.

10

Alleluia



Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

(Jn 21:15-17)

*Francis, Pastor and Bishop of Geneva 1602-1622.
Now the Diocese is in his hands and it is up to him to lead it. He feels the weight and effort of this new task:
“That day God had taken me from myself and thus give me to the people, meaning that he had transformed me from what I was for myself into what I had to be for them.”*

◀ *Jesus commissions his disciples*

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Duccio di Buoninsegna,
L'Apparizione di Cristo sul
monte della Galilea,
Museo dell'Opera
Metropolitana del Duomo
(Siena).

11

Alleluia

➔ Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”
(Mt 28:18-20)

The Risen One entrusts the universal mission. What shall we do, then, Canons of Geneva? With charity we must tear down the walls of Geneva, with charity we must invade it, with charity we must reconquer it. It is with hunger and thirst endured by ourselves that we must repel the enemy. How to reconquer it? As Holofernes did with the city of Bethulia: by cutting off the springs, by cutting off the aqueducts!

There is an aqueduct that nourishes and refreshes, so to speak, every category of heretic, and this can be identified as the bad example of perverse priests, the actions, words and the wickedness of everyone, but especially of the clergy. We must live as children of God. not only in name, but also in fact.

◀ Jesus ascends into heaven

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Duccio di Buoninsegna,
L'Apparizione di Cristo sul
monte della Galilea,
Museo dell'Opera
Metropolitana del Duomo
(Siena).

12

Alleluia

As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."
(Acts 1:9-11)

Have you ever seen, Philothea, a large fireplace covered with ashes? When you come ten or twelve hours later in search of fire, you will find only a little at the centre and even that with difficulty. Yet it is there, and since you find it, you can rekindle with it all other coals that had already gone out. It is the same with charity, which is our spiritual life, amidst great and violent temptations. In fact, the temptation casting its delight into the inferior part of the soul seems to cover the whole soul with ashes and to reduce the love of God to a spark. For it appears only in the very centre of the heart, in the very depths of the spirit. It seems so imperceptible that it is difficult to discover it at all. Yet it is really there. Even though all may be troubled in our soul and our body, yet we have the resolution never to consent to the sin or to the temptation.



Mary and the disciples wait in prayer

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Pentecoste, Messale
secolo XIV, in pergamena
(Anglia orientale).

13

Alleluia



They went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of[c] James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

(Acts 1:13-14)

You should say them [your prayers] fixing your attention earnestly on the words, and allowing their meaning to stir up good movements in your will. Do not hurry in order to say many prayers but take care to say those that you do say from the heart. One Our Father said earnestly is of greater value than many recited quickly and in a hurry.



The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
For He whom you did merit to bear,
Has risen, as he said,
Pray for us to God,
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
For the Lord has truly risen.



Pentecoste - El Greco
(1597-1600), Museo
Nacional del Prado,
Madrid.

14

Alleluia



When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

(Acts 2:1-4)

As for myself, if I had, for example, taken great care not to fall into the vice of vanity and yet fell deeply into it, I would not like to correct my heart in the following manner: "Are you not wretched and abominable that after so many resolutions you allowed yourself to be carried away by vanity? Die of shame, do not raise your eyes to heaven, you blind, shameless, traitor disloyal to your God"; and similar expressions." But I would like to correct it reasonably by means of compassion: "Alas! my poor heart, here we are fallen again into the ditch which we had so firmly decided to avoid. Let us get up and leave it for ever. Let us entreat the mercy of God and hope that henceforth it will help us to be firm; let us return to the path of humility."

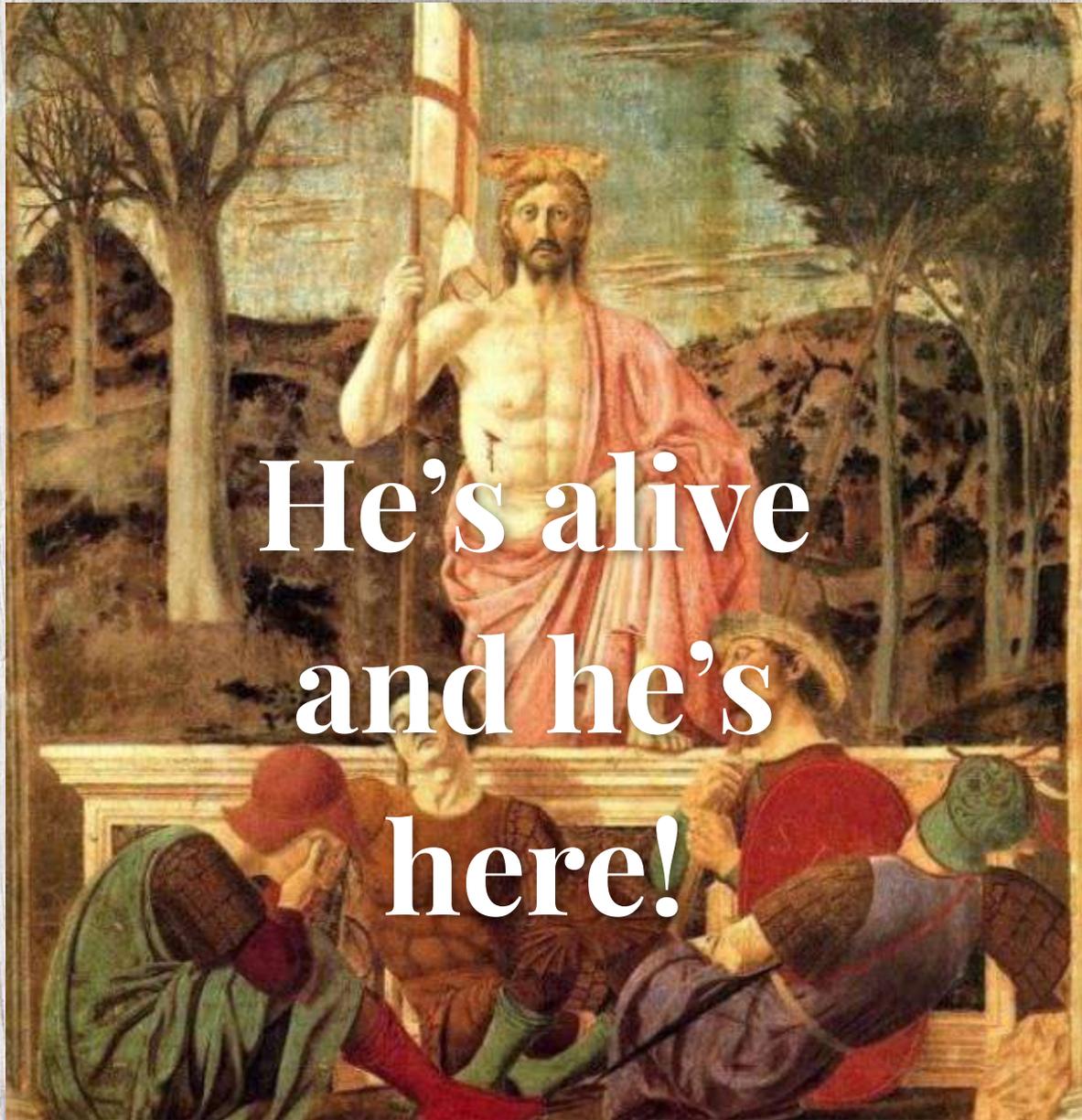


Jesus Christ is risen! Love has triumphed over hatred, life has conquered death, light has dispelled the darkness!

On Easter morning, alerted by the women, Peter and John ran to the tomb. They found it open and empty. Then they drew near and “bent down” in order to enter it. To enter into the mystery, we need to “bend down”, to abase ourselves. Only those who abase themselves understand the glorification of Jesus and are able to follow him on his way. Those who bear within them God’s power, his love and his justice, do not need to employ violence; they speak and act with the power of truth, beauty and love. From the risen Lord we ask today the grace not to succumb to the pride which fuels violence and war, but to have the humble courage of pardon and peace. We ask Jesus, the Victor over death, to lighten the sufferings of our many brothers and sisters who are persecuted for his name, and of all those who suffer injustice as a result of ongoing conflicts and violence. There are so many of them!

Franciscus

“Ubi et Orbi” message – Easter 2015



He's alive
and he's
here!