



Common Letter No. 27  
Mother Angela Strobel, OSB  
Olinda, Easter, 2011

My dear Sisters,

My Easter greetings and wishes come to you from Olinda, Brazil, where our visitation goes on throughout the Liturgical Time of Lent and Easter - Passion to Resurrection. I have the grace to experience once again what I experienced throughout my 30 years' stay in Olinda. It's about the simple and vibrant faith of the people.

Not only Carnival, but also Lenten Time, especially the time of Passion and Resurrection, is lived with intensity. Four popular processions occur during this time. The week prior to Holy Week, two processions pass through the streets of Olinda: on Thursday evening, a crowd carrying candles forms the "Procissão do Encerro" – they follow the concealed images of our Lord carrying the cross, Mother Mary, St. John and Mary Magdalen. On Friday afternoon, another crowd accompanies the statue of Jesus carrying the cross, beautifully decorated with flowers, the "Procissão dos Passos." It is the Way of the Cross, with only one station, the fourth, Jesus encounters his Mother, Mary. After the Liturgical Act of Good Friday, another procession passes by our convent. The deceased Lord (Senhor morto), embedded in flowers, is carried solemnly, followed by the decorated images of Mother Mary, St. John and Mary Magdalen .

Were it not for the melancholic song from the loudspeakers, you would think of joyful processions. The buzz of the crowd sounds happy. People are praying but also talking, greeting those at the side, children dressed like the Lord and carrying small crosses, eating popcorn...Under the bright Brazilian sun the colorful crowd moves on, slowly, enjoying.

And finally, very early on Easter morning, announced by trumpets and fire crackers, we Sisters await the Procession of the Risen Lord.

The question is: what makes these processions so popular and what makes people happily follow Jesus in his suffering and death?

My reasoning is: the people know real suffering. Jesus is one of them, the Son of God is their brother, one who is with them, one who suffered like them and for them. They just know in faith what the author of the letter to the Hebrews expressed (Heb 2,10-11) "*.. when bringing many sons to glory God should make their leader in the work of salvation perfect through suffering. He who consecrates and those who are consecrated have one and the same Father. Therefore Jesus is not ashamed to call them*

*BROTHERS.*” In their simple and strong faith they are convinced that: “*The sufferings of the present are nothing compared with the glory to be revealed. Christ Jesus who has died or rather was raised up, is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us... (Rom 8, 18.34)* And the following verse of St. Paul’s letter to the Romans (8,35) is sung here in the region of Northeastern Brazil like an anthem of the faithful: “*Who will separate us from the love of Christ?*”

May we also have this conviction, this simple and vibrant faith! Then in all our sufferings and in the much greater sufferings of so many people all over the world, we may with deep joy celebrate the Paschal Triduum:

***CHRIST OUR PASSOVER has been sacrificed,  
let us celebrate the FEAST with sincerity and truth.*** (I Cor 5,7)

HAPPY EASTER!

*Sr. Angela OSB*

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Devoção dos Pezinhos – São João del-Rei



Senhora do Carmo do Sotobão – São João del-Rei



Imagem do Procissão dos Pezinhos do Recife  
Site: <http://InternacionalCilgajajaj.com>