

Statio: May 2007

My Fifth Gospel - Jesus Christ called me in his gratuitous love - Const II,1

“Now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him. Remember”. Mt 28:7

“Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me”. Mt 28:10

“They went to Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him...” Mt 28:16

Did you ever wonder why Matthew insists so much to go back to Galilee, and only there the disciples could see Jesus after the resurrection? Galilee was the place where everything had begun with Jesus, where they were called into discipleship, where they had followed him, where he had preached in the synagogues, where he made his programmatic Sermon on the Mount, where they not had failed him as they did in Jerusalem. Go back to the beginnings...

We want to see Jesus, the Risen one. We want to experience his promise of staying with us. In our lives too we have to go back to our “Galilee”, that means to our beginnings to find Jesus there in our lives.

Moses requested to see the dazzling light of Yahweh’s presence. The Lord answered that he can only see his back, after he passed by, not his face (Exodus 33:18-23). I believe all of us have experienced the vision of the Lord only after he passed by, from behind. Only in remembering we recognised what the beloved disciple said to Peter: “It is the Lord” John 21:7.

Remember (a word over and over in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy) and as well in the Eucharistic Liturgy. Remember and tell your story, your fifth gospel, the book of your life. My life, your life is a gospel, good news of the Lord’s loving revelation. But the gospel in the bookshelf without reading it and taking to our hearts, is useless. We have to go back to that gospel, our life, like the disciples had to walk from Jerusalem to Galilee. That needed their resolve, the time and effort of literally walking the distance, about three days walks. Otherwise they would not see the Lord.

My dear Sisters, in this Easter Season, this Statio, I wish each one of us to walk this distance back to my own Galilee, to the beginnings, to read the fifth gospel of my life and to tell the story.

When I started to write up the life of Sr. Irene I could find only a few dates. Since 1973 not a single word. Abbot Dionys told me: “You know, with us in the Abbey each one has to write about his life and to have a picture ready. Death can knock at our door at any time”.

Benedict gives us a tool of good work into our hands when he instructs us: Day by day remind yourself that you are going to die. RB 4: 47.

I pondered over it and wanted in a circular letter to ask each sister to write the most important dates about her life. But that would be not a house, only some pillars of the house. I beg you for this Statio to really go back in prayerful memory from childhood until the present date and read your gospel and write it down.

Of course you would start with the date of your birth, who your parents were, how many siblings you had, schooling. How come that you entered our congregation? What did you

expect? What was, has been most important for your spiritual journey? Where did you have professional training, where were you stationed, which responsibilities?

Can you find a word of scripture as title for your life so far?

Imagine your tomb stone would have an inscription to summarize your life; what do you want to be written there?

Where did have very dense experiences of God passing by in your life, seeing him from the back, as Moses did?

I am sure that the life of each of our Sisters is rich in such experiences. Many of them you would know immediately. But might be, some you will discover only now. Go back to your Galilee and meet the Lord there, the Risen one, the one who is alive. Many events looked first so negative, dreadful, only later you recognised the blessings, the learning, the presence of God, the pass-over.

At the end of this Statio you will have a document written (either in Kiswahili , English or German) which is first of all a treasure box for yourself and a document of thanks for the Lord. *“Lord, I give you thanks and praise, that you have been present in my life. I trust that you will be with me until I my last moment. I ask for pardon that I failed to notice you so many times. Open my eyes and make me thankful.”*

I ask you further to give a copy to me for your personal file in the Prioress’ office. Might be you have some details which are very private and you do not want to share with anybody. That is fine. You do not write them in the letter to be given to me. If you wish you can put your life story in a closed envelope and write outside: *to be opened only after my death.*

We can periodically update our life story, our fifth gospel over the years. It really helps to have vividly your death before you, without being afraid. For sure many sisters went through such an exercise already.

It is helpful to share your life story with others whom you trust. Confidentiality is very important in doing so. But telling my story to one or more who listen attentively with their heart and respect my person gives a lot of value to my life. You can read your life story as well aloud to the Lord. I am sure in really taking the trouble to write it all down, from the very start until this day, is worth the effort and rewarding for you.

I wish you lots of new discoveries during this Statio and really beg you to give me a document, which is confidential, until 15 May. It has not to be typed, hand written is fine and as said before in one of the three languages or even in three!

Let us go together back to Galilee. There we shall see him. That promise is worth the little trouble and what a joy for each one and for the whole community. And finally we do what the apostles did: “When they saw him, they worshipped him”. And to hear his sending:

“Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.” Mt 28: 17-20

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