



Why Do You Seek the Living Among the Dead

by Pope Francis

This week is the week of joy, the week in which we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. It is a true and deep joy founded on the certainty that the Risen Christ will never die again. Rather, he is alive and at work in the Church and in the world.

This certainty has abided in the hearts of believers since that first Easter morning when the women went to Jesus' tomb and the angels asked them: *Why do you seek the living among the dead?* (Lk 24:5)

How many times along our daily journey do we need to hear these words! How often do we search for life among inert things, among things that cannot give life, among things that are here today and gone tomorrow, among the things that pass away?

We need to hear these words when we shut ourselves in any form of selfishness and complacency, when we allow ourselves to be seduced by worldly powers and by the things of this world, forgetting God and neighbour, when we place our hope in worldly vanities, in money and in success.

Then the Word of God says to us: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" That thing cannot give you life. Yes, perhaps it will cheer you up for a moment, for a day, for a week, for a month. And then?

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" This phrase must enter into our hearts, and we need to repeat it over and over to ourselves. Why do *I* seek the living among the dead?

It is not easy to be open to Jesus. Nor is it a given that we shall accept the life of the Risen One and his presence among us. The Gospel shows us different reactions: that of the Apostle Thomas, that of Mary Magdalene, and that of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. It would be good to compare ourselves with them.

Thomas places a condition on belief; he asks to touch the evidence, the wounds. Mary Magdalene weeps; she sees him, but she does not recognize him. The disciples on the way to Emmaus, who are feeling depressed and defeated, attain an encounter with Jesus by allowing that mysterious wayfarer to accompany them.

Each one was on a different path. Each was seeking the living among the dead, and it was the Lord himself who directed their course. And he will always be close to us to correct our course if we have strayed.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" This question enables us to overcome the temptation to look back to what was yesterday, and it spurs us on to the future.

Jesus is the living One, the risen One, the One who always renews his body, which is the Church, and enables it to walk by drawing it towards him.

"Yesterday" is the tomb of Jesus and the tomb of the Church, the tomb of truth and justice. "Today" is the perennial Resurrection to which the Holy Spirit impels us, bestowing on us full freedom.

Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who withdraw into yourself after a failure, and you who no longer have the strength to pray?

Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who feel alone, abandoned by friends and perhaps also by God?

Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who have lost hope and you who feel imprisoned by your sins?

Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who aspire to beauty, to spiritual perfection, to justice, and to peace?

This question helps us leave behind our empty sadness and opens us up to the horizons of joy and hope—the hope which rolls back the stones from tombs and encourages one to proclaim the Good News, capable of generating new life for others.

Behold, brothers and sisters, Christ is alive. He is with us. Do not go to the many tombs that today promise you something and then give you nothing. Christ is alive! Let us not seek the living among the dead.

— Excerpted from the pope's general audience catechesis in St. Peter's Square, Easter Wednesday, April 23, 2014