

THERE IS NO EASTER WITHOUT JESUS, THE WOMEN, AND GALILEE

Jean Tisserand was a Franciscan Monk who was born in Lyon, France, around the 14th Century. He was so much on fire with the love of God that he became one of those who evangelised France by going on several Missions. Jean Tisserand was so much in love of God that various Bishops and Cardinals in France begged him to come to their territory for mission because of the fire of God in him. It was said that when Jean Tisserand preached, everyone listened and his preachings were so powerful that thousands of conversions were attributed to him. Before long, he became the Confessor to Queen Anne of Brittany who entrusted him with the conversion and education of girls in France. His interactions with those women who gave their lives wholeheartedly to God revealed to him the profundity and spirituality of women and what they bring to the Church. Hence, Jean Tisserand became one of the pioneer advocates of women involvement in the Church. Around 1494, Jean composed one of my favourite Easter Hymns which is the summary of the Gospel we heard tonight according to Mark Chapter 16. That hymn is – *O Fili et Filiae*.

Verse one and two of it go thus: **“Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! O sons and daughters, let us sing. The king of heav’n, the glorious king, o’er death today rose triumphing, Alleluia! That Easter morn, at break of day, the faithful women went their way, to seek the tomb where Jesus lay, Alleluia!”** Yes, this hymn expresses concretely what happened when Sabbath was over, that is, early on Sunday morning; while the disciples were possibly sleeping and/pr in fear of the Roman authorities and in fear of their lives, the women had other plans. They had prepared spices and were on their way to the tomb, to anoint the one they love – Jesus Christ. Is it interesting that the women whom the Patriarchal Jewish culture had kept hidden and away from the limelight, were the ones who were working the hardest. They ministered to Jesus while He was alive, and they were ready to minister to Him in death. This is the story of all women even in this present age; without women, there will not be any society and certainly no Church. Women in our present day and age are the ones to keep things together; they look after the homes, professional industries, different Charities, and still have time to look after the Church. Yes, women go the extra mile and Christ chose them to be the first hearers of the Good News of His Resurrection.

Another message Jean Tisserand entrusted to us in the hymn above is the importance of Galilee. In Verse three of the hymn above, he said: **“An Angel clad in white they see, who sat, and spoke unto the three, your Lord has gone to Galilee, Alleluia.”** Yes, the Angel at the end of our Gospel today told the women to go to Galilee, that they will see Jesus there. But then, what is the significance of Galilee? Galilee is divided in Upper and Lower parts; Jesus came from Lower Galilee and that was His home for 33 years. It was there that He was nurtured, it was there He called His first four disciples, it was also there that He performed most of His miracles. Yes, Galilee was Jesus’ comfort zone and He returned there after His resurrection. But there is another side to Galilee too.

Upper Galilee was inhabited by so many gentiles, it was there that the Samaritans lived, it was there that people who did not know God live, it was there that the outcasts of the society lived too. That was why this Upper Galilee is called **“Galilee of the Nations/Gentiles by stated by Isaiah 9:1 and Matthew 4:12-16.** Indeed, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light and that light is Christ. Yes, to see Jesus today, we need to find Him in our Comfort Zones and in the Peripheries – among the outcasts of society and Church; among those rejected and carrying heavy burdens and among those who have been termed Irredeemable. Those are our Galilees and Christ is encouraging you and I to boldly step into our Galilees and see Him staring back at us.

My friends, on this Easter Night, I urge us to search and discover our various Galilees – Our Comfort Zones and Our Distressing Zones and allow the light of the Risen Christ who has been there waiting for us to encounter us. Our lives will never be the same if we put out into deep waters and allow the Resurrected Christ to encounter us this Easter. We join Jean Tisserand in singing once more: “Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! O sons and daughters, let us sing. The king of heav’n, the glorious king, o’er death today rose triumphing, Alleluia!” We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song. **Happy Easter!!!**



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