

The Tarpeian Rock and the Golgotha

There is a rock in Rome called Tarpeian Rock. From the top of this rock, people were hurled downstairs to kill them. It was a place of execution. It was near the Capitol Hill, where the victorious generals were welcomed to acclaim them, a place of triumph and glory. But the glory is ephemeral, and luck can turn, so the triumphant hero was reminded that "the Tarpeian Rock is near the Capitol". It became a proverb, verified in the sad end of career, yesterday and today, of people honored in the war, in politics or in business.

In Jerusalem, and no longer in Rome, a Christian encounters the opposite situation. There is a hill, the Golgotha, on which the condemned were executed by the ordeal of the cross, place of death for Jesus and for the two thieves. Near the hill (John 19,41) and therefore lower, there was a tomb in which was deposited the body of Jesus. A large stone was rolled to close the tomb. On the morning of Easter, the women and apostles found this tomb empty: "Jesus is no longer here, he is risen".

In Jerusalem, it is not death that follows triumph. It is the unexpected triumph that follows death: "death is dead" writes Saint Paul. From the tomb comes life, life of the resurrected that he proposes to share with us since our baptism.

All human life walks, more or less quickly, towards death. The path is sometimes painful, sometimes sore. But it leads to life, it is a promise of life and resurrection.

This is not a proverb, as for the Tarpeian Rock. That's good news. We welcome it in hope and in joy.

Happy Easter!

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