

MY CONNECTION NO 3

Laval, April 10 2020

A virtual hug to each and every one of you,

Will you believe me if I tell you that this period of COVID-19 is a time of grace? Don't worry. I first affirm that it's a great misfortune....and then I say it's a great grace for me. It reminds me of a recent meeting with a friend from youth. I knew Alain was being treated for cancer. So I expected him to tell me about his struggle and I would sympathize in his desolation. Oh surprise: "This time is the best time of my life. I am rediscovering my inner values," he said. I'm a bit there myself. Only a bit. In everything that upsets me because of COVID-19, in my disarray and confinement, I perceive graces that I didn't expect at all. I tame my fears, I discover my fragile humanity, I accept my death, I take care of my interiority, I am alive and I give my life.



This is said rather quickly, in two lines, but this is what I experience internally. In fact, before the declaration of the pandemic, I had begun Lent by adopting a practice that I discovered in Cambodia: "The cross in my hand". I had even prepared a small leaflet for my companions at the Central House of the Foreign Missions where I live. If it is true that I prayed with the cross in my hand, I think above all that it was the cross that led me by the hand. It is the Lord who is leading me by the hand.

In my confinement I have added other little personal rites. Given the current circumstances in Quebec, we are all deprived of community rituals (as you are probably also where you are). So I invented other rituals, adapted to my present life. For example, last Sunday, I prayed with a photo of the palms I had received from a friend in Sudan. On the official day of Easter - April 12, this year - I will unite with the whole Church by lighting my candle for Jesus the Light of the World.



Knowing that the date of Easter in the universal calendar is always set "on the Sunday following the full moon of the spring equinox", my personal Easter will be later, if God lends me life. I will find a rite to make my Passover blossom. You know, I agree with the fox who said to the Little Prince: "a rite is something too forgotten". I'll remember that!

I have to admit that there is another event in my life that I still have difficulty recording on the side of graces. Last November, my Superior General, Martin Laliberté, joined me on the phone while I was visiting our missionaries in Brazil. He had just accepted to serve as Auxiliary Bishop in Quebec City. Since I was his vicar general, I automatically became his successor. I was once again Superior General. A grace? I would have done without it, but I'm trying to find out if there is a grace of state, as we used to say in old time. This responsibility was to lead me to travel more. Thanks to COVID 19, this problem is solved, at least for a while! So I'm learning tele-mission. With internet and my cell phone I am learning how to be a tele-superior.

This gives me an advantage: that of ending this letter with the "Word of the Superior" that I have prepared for our website with the title "What Happy Easter?" "You can read it in <https://www.smelaval.org/welcome.html>

Happy Easter to everyone in your own home!

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