

Message to the Calabrian Family at the beginning of the Holy Week.

(03-04-2020)

Dear brothers and sisters of the Calabrian family,

With my fraternal greeting, in the beginning of the Holy Week, I address you all, to express my nearness in this particular moment that Italy and the rest of the world is experiencing.

It seemed to me very appropriate, dear Brother, Sister and Lay people, to make myself present in your communities, families, and the various activities, inviting you to live a very special Holy Week.

I thought it is fitting to make you feel our nearness, the nearness of the entire Opera through my word as the Casante, to tell you that in communion with the brothers and sisters of the Mother House of San Zeno in Monte you are remembered daily in our prayers, celebration of the Eucharist, full day adorations and the blessing of the world with the repique of St. John Calabria. Not a single day is spent when I have not thought of you and carried you in my heart.

During this Holy Week you will not be able to participate in the various celebrations full of meaning and spiritual depth in your parishes and communities to which you belong to. Don't feel alone; we build a unity and communion as visualised by Fr. Calabria with the image he often used with "*communicating vessels*". There is a spiritual current that flows from one to the other, and the good thrives for the benefit of all. There is a spiritual unity, with our adhesion to Jesus, through listening and sharing His Word, in intense prayer; taking the opportunity to follow the different liturgical celebrations through the media and attend Jesus who continues to embody this mystery of love and pain in the humanity affected by the coronavirus.

Fr. Calabria would invite us to join the suffering, in which humanity is affected today, by rediscovering the presence of Jesus who continues to suffer and live in the heart of it. I remember his words written to Fr. Adami in 1953, which we can make as ours today: *"I am here in front of my Crucifix and my thoughts runs to you in these Holy Days and I measure your great suffering for not being able to participate in Holy Week functions; but at the same time I think that you are carrying out another great mission in enduring peacefully the sufferings that the Lord sends you, I wonder what graces and gifts they will bring to the Opera of the Lord ¹."*

¹ ADAMI DON LUIGI * 8630 S. Pasqua 1953

It seems to me that our Holy Week can be lived in particular harmony with humanity, joining suffering, partaking in the hope of the redemption that Jesus has already conquered for us with his passion, death and resurrection. A Holy Week, less "*ritual*" and livelier in spirit and harmony in love that overcomes the world. Because "*Nobody has a love greater than this: to give his life for his friends*", thus reminds us Jesus our Lord.

And it is touching how this love is expressed in the concrete and simple signs of everyday life; in the suffering and dedication of parents with disabled children, in the untiring work of doctors, health workers, instructors, volunteers, of those who work to relieve so much pain to the lonely and elderly people, those who lose their jobs, and all those who suffer. And many others with their prayers support the arms of those who are in the midst of suffering and pain to raise them.

And in this context Jesus celebrates his week of passion and his resurrection in today's history. He continues to repeat the same actions he has always shown to save humanity, and invites us to enter into this logic of love to the point to give his own life. He lives his passion to the extent that I, you, we let ourselves be touched by this mystery of suffering, love and salvation that transforms our heart and our life.

Dear brothers and sisters, we begin with this spirit to the celebrations of Holy Week, in deep communion with all the humanity, with the whole Church, with the Opera, remembering that the graces of the Divine Redeemer are today poured upon us to the extent to which we open ourselves to receive this mystery with faith.

I believe and I am convinced that the Holy Week lived in this way will also be for us, the Calabrian Family, a shower of abundant blessings to confirm us more and more in the mission we have to attest to the world that God is Father, loves us infinitely and does not abandon us.

Fr. Calabria would invite us to receive this hour of darkness and suffering with the contemplation of that light which still exists and certainly will have to shine better on all forms of this agony. A light that will soon return to shine overcoming all the evil. With our participation in this mystery together with all humanity, we anticipate that the Resurrection which is approaching and leading us all to live fully the new humanity Christ came to proclaim.

With the profound desire in my heart so that this Holy Week would bring us authentic spiritual fruits in our life, I greet you and bless you through the intercession of St John Calabria.

I think of you, and am close to each one of you. I will join you again for the Easter message.

Wishing you a meaningful Holy Week!

P. Miguel Tofful