

CHRIST IS RISEN

Easter, the most amazing news of all

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Every year, Easter reminds us of the most amazing news of all: Jesus Christ rose from the dead! And yet, this extraordinary event which is at the heart of the faith of every true Christian, may not be of interest to others. In which manner, therefore, can we bring the Paschal Message to those whom we hold dear? We shall analyse the way publicity works in order to understand its secrets, and use them to announce Christ more efficaciously.

How does publicity convince us to buy products which are objectively not necessary? Let's perform a brief analysis. Generally speaking, during the commercial of a product, the product's actual value is not indicated, nor are its technical characteristics (i.e.: dimensions, length of duration, materials with which the product is produced) mentioned. Marketing tends to make use of an expedient – a trick – for which experts have coined the term “diversion technique”.

This technique consists in focusing the attention of the spectator upon a particular aspect which serves as emotional leverage, drawing the consumer to the acquisition. For example, to publicise a cookie product, the commercial represents a family in which everyone is happy, loving and caring to each other. In this manner, a woman watching the commercial will unconsciously think: “In order to bring tranquility and serenity to our family breakfasts, I have to buy these cookies, which will result in our family being happy!”

Let's provide another example: to publicise running shoes, marketing strategists choose champions as testimonials (i.e.: a famous soccer player, an Olympic Champion or some athlete holding a World Record), presenting them winning their races wearing those particular shoes. Consequently, an amateur sportsman viewing the commercial will unconsciously be led to believe “it's thanks to those shoes that the champion won, therefore if I purchase them, my performance will certainly improve.” The truth, obviously, is that he will probably not become a champion, with or without the shoes. Hence, we may observe that with the “diversion technique”, publicity promises that which is not possible: it promises to make an irrational desire a reality.

In which way does this question help us to better understand Easter? Why do the Gospels depict Christ crucified, the maximum antithesis of the so-called marketing technique! How many new “clients” could potentially be acquired by stating that the Christian objective is to take up one's cross and abandon one's desires? Jesus clearly says “Renounce yourself” and not “Realise yourself”, as the world suggests. The Lord proposes a way to those who wish to follow Him, which does not provide for life's commodities, the realisation of one's desires, or the possibility of doing things not

according to God's will but according to one's own will.

From a marketing perspective, advertisers would state that Christianity is destined for certain failure! And even the disciples, who certainly were not marketing experts, said "This language is difficult, who can understand it?".

But Jesus was sincere from the very beginning: "They persecuted me, they will also persecute you", and in truth, the followers of Christ are persecuted everywhere. Do you want to be a Christian? Then take up your cross, accept suffering, renounce your desires.

A certain joke recounts how a man, prior to death, is given the incredible possibility of going to see what Eternity is like, so that he can understand more fully how things are and choose wisely. He is given the opportunity of visiting both Paradise and Hell. He goes to Heaven, where an Angel serves as guide, explaining how everyone in Heaven cares about one another, and that they are kind, loving and beatific. Then a devil accompanies him to Hell, stating that in Hell, everyone cares about one another, they are kind and loving, and in short: beatific. The man asks if he has understood correctly, because it seems odd to him that Heaven and Hell would be identical, but the devil responds stating that Hell is even better, because it permits you to do whatever you want during your life on earth, without affecting one's condition in the afterlife. The man returns to Earth, and as a consequence of this experience, begins living sinfully, fulfilling all of his desires whenever and wherever they can be fulfilled. The years go by, he dies, and he presents himself to God, who sends him straight to Hell, but he remains unperturbed. When the man arrives to present himself before the devil who accompanied him on his previous visit, he greets the fiend affectionately, but the devil – instead of politely exchanging the greeting as he had done previously - gives the man a kick straight into the flames, and an eternity of torments, sufferings and solitude commences for him. The man then complains to the devil: "Excuse me, but on my first visit, Hell seemed different than it does now", but the devil responds: "Of course! We do wonders with our publicity!".

It's true. The Devil is a marketing expert. He promises to satisfy mankind's greatest desire, which consists in eternal beatitude: an existence of true self-realisation without either death or suffering. But that is Paradise! And yet, the Devil wants to convince us of the contrary. This is what happened in our Earthly Paradise: the Tempter didn't state that through disobedience, our ancestors would have known pain, illness and death, transmitting these to the entire human race, but rather, he convinces Eve that she will not only remain in the earthly paradise, but that she would also have become like God, and hence capable of realising all her desires. We all experience the temptation to live

according to our own desires, establishing our own personal laws, forgetting about God. The Devil, as an able marketing expert, continues to promise the fulfilment of an unfulfillable desire: to live without God and to do as we please. But without God, life is not better: it is a nightmare!

We do not follow Jesus because we like the Cross, or because we enjoy suffering. We do not do so out of self-abnegation or desire to obey the Commandments, but rather because Christ gives us what no publicity is able to give.

Only Christ Jesus keeps His promises: He saves, gives new life, completely purifies us of our sins, and provides a sense to the suffering of illness and death, because he has raised us to Eternal Life. The Gospels are not commercials, they do not illustrate a reality which is pleasant to listen to, and they certainly do not propose a way of life which is easy-going and without problems. Christian Life is serious: we are here on Earth to know, love and serve God, and to remain in His Beatific Presence for all Eternity, as the Catechism of Pius X reminds us. Keeping this Truth in mind: we are able to face any illness, or even death, because we know that Christ Jesus -sacrificing Himself on the Cross and in His Resurrection, has saved us from Evil, from the Evil One, from a senseless life, from infernal suffering. How could we possibly live without Him?