

**Cast out into the deep: missionary reflections (2003 – 2010)**  
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**After the quite** impressive and somewhat graphic celebrations of Good Friday, it was time for the joy of Easter to unfold. Early in the morning on Easter Sunday - before dawn - two groups gathered separately, in silence: a group of men carrying the statue of the Risen Christ, and a group of women carrying the black veiled statue of the Sorrowful Mother.

Quietly, they moved toward the church for the *Salubong* or “meeting” of the Risen Lord with his Mother. Catholics have been pretty busy on Holy Saturday decorating with orchids and other beautiful flowers the two statues. Some of the most skilled carpenters in the village built a wooden stairway descending from the facade of the church.

When the two processions reached the front of the church, the silence of the night was suddenly broken by the song of the angels: “Rejoice, O Queen of heaven, for he whom you were privileged to bear has risen as he said, alleluia!”

Yes, there were angels coming down from the stairway! A dozen little girls, carefully dressed in white and with paper wings, were gracefully singing that hymn of joy when one of them lifted the dark veil of grief and mourning from the statue of Mary. Rejoice, the long dark night is over! The Risen Lord has conquered death and will never die again! It is 4:30 am. The celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord can begin now.

This joyful meeting of the sorrowful Mother and her risen Son is not recorded in the gospels. Never mind: they like to think that the Risen Jesus would have certainly appeared to his mother first, to share with her the good news of his resurrection.

*Salubong* tells us that we can meet the Risen Lord in the many signs of his enduring presence among us: his Word, his sacraments, his Church, the poor and the needy. We meet Christ in private prayer and where the values of his Kingdom are respected and affirmed.

*Salubong* makes us incurable optimists. The power of sin is still real, but its power is not ultimate: Jesus has won the decisive victory over sin and death. Nothing can ever be the same. His glory is our hope of glory.