**Year XXXIII n. 24 November 20, 2016**

**Devotion to God is mightier than all else**

History is guided by two forces in constant conflict: by God with his light, his wisdom, truth, justice, love, holiness and by Satan with his darkness, foolishness, stupidity, wickedness, evil, hate and lust. The Creator of man works life, prosperity and peace. Satan, the proud, the usurper, the prince of all wickedness and injustice, creates divisions, wars and every type of death. God always acts to take away the souls to Satan, to free them from his power of spiritual and physical slavery. Satan, envious of the life that God gives to man, wants to kidnap it from him, so that it stays with him in the death of the soul, spirit and body in the flames of eternal fire forever in despair.

Sacred Scripture on each page reveals both the fruits of those who let themselves be guided by the wisdom and of those who are led by foolishness. Those who are with God work for the good of humanity, those who are of Satan not only do they work evil for themselves, they become for others a killing machine. Can the righteous be freed from the hands of the wicked? Never. There is no human possibility. Only the Lord is the one who can free from the wicked and evil. Jacob is afraid of his brother. He wishes he could appease his wrath through human ways, sending him many gifts, attesting him his coming in peace. The Lord overnight teaches him that the victory of a man lies in his piety, which is not prayer, but his intimate union with his Creator, Lord and God: *"But Wisdom delivered from tribulations those who served her. She, when the just man fled from his brother's anger, guided him in direct ways, Showed him the kingdom of God and gave him knowledge of holy things; She prospered him in his labours and made abundant the fruit of his works, Stood by him against the greed of his defrauders, and enriched him; She preserved him from foes, and secured him against ambush, And she gave him the prize for his stern struggle that he might know that devotion to God is mightier than all else” (Cf. Wis from 10.1 to 21).*

Piety is the vital relationship of love that makes us fulfil all the will of God, with the certainty of faith that the obedience required, even if it were to go through our death, is for us the only way of life. Pity was what saved Christ in the tomb after having obeyed the Father until death on the cross: *"In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to God who could save him from death, and, for his full abandonment to him, he was heard"* (exauditus pro sua reverentia - e„sakousqeˆj ¢pÕ tÁj eÙlabe…aj *See* Heb 5.7 to 10). Jesus was not heard because he prayed, but because he prayed to surrender, to be self-given, to immerse himself in the full will of the Father.

Wisdom teaches man that his life is God, in Him, from Him, for Him. In prayer the man asks his God for the grace to accept His divine will, even if this were to go through physical death, knowing that martyrdom is the only way for him to be able to remain in the life of his God. Who rules the life of man is the Lord. Which path has the Lord chosen, does he choose for my life? Obedience is for live in freedom from death, but even in death for deliverance from the evil and wickedness of man. The man is not the one who chooses the way, but the Lord always does. To the Lord who chooses the way you abandon yourself with full confidence.

Piety is not prayer, it is rather the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes us be always and in any case true children of the Father, to whom the son hands over his will so that in it only the Father's will is done. Prayer becomes the instrument through which in the particular, good, bad, just, unjust, honest and dishonest events of history, the gift of our will is always renewed to the Father. This is the confident abandonment, the *"reverence"*, the bow of faith made to the Father, knowing that the Father is not the God of death, but of eternal life. In prayer Christ gives himself to the God that would have made him the gift of eternal life and of his infinite and divine glory.

This is why compassion is more powerful than everything. *"Reverence"* is more powerful than death, because the personal death, in *"reverence"*, is offered to the Lord and transformed into the redemption, salvation and justification of many. Prayer is in the service of mercy for it to be able to express itself in the fullness of its truth; fullness is only one: complete, total surrender of the personal life to the Lord. Life is his. Let Him make of it the use he wants to for the purposes he wants. Piety, lived in faith and prayer, knows that the Lord will make of our life just one use: of redemption, salvation and eternal life. He will serve himself of our death to make all his immortal life shine in our body.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Woman sacrificed entirely to your God and Lord with true trustful abandonment, with deep reverence, with a bow of most pure love until the martyrdom of the soul on Golgotha. You who are in the glory of Heaven, you, that even in the body are covered of God and of his eternal holiness, helps us, your children, so that we, too, bow in reverent homage of obedience and delivery of our life, so that He makes of it the instrument of his salvation and redemption of hearts.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

**The service from faith to faith**

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis in Baku, Azerbaijan (02.10.2016)

Pope Francis specifies the indissoluble unity that exists between faith and service: "*Faith and service cannot be separated; on the contrary, they are intimately linked, interwoven with each other [...] Faith is the golden thread which binds us to the Lord, [...] it is a gift that lasts our whole life, but bears fruit only if we play our part. [...] Service is thus a way of life; indeed it recapitulates the entire Christian way of life: serving God, [...] loving our neighbour with practical deeds"* (Homily).

Faith finds its practical dimension in the service to brothers, so that it is not possible to speak of a faith that is not operational, just as there is not a really Christian service that does not find its motivations and its source in faith.

Faith springs from a profound union with God that involves the entire life of a man (body, soul and spirit), the life of time as that of eternity. St. Paul says that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing concerns the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). If faith comes from hearing, never there be a faith without the acceptance of a word heard. Since our faith is in Christ - the one and only way to salvation -, it is necessary that who speaks says and proclaims the true Word of Christ. Nothing is added and nothing is taken away from the Word of God (cf. Dt 13.1), nothing is omitted or changed, but the Gospel message must be presented fully and integral.

The responsibility of who speaks or utters in the name of Christ is truly great, it's a responsibility that envelops time and eternity. For one of our words the other person can be saved or lost. Several times in Scripture the Lord warns his people so that they do not let themselves be misled by false prophets or dreamers (Dt 13,2), who prophesied according to their wishes, weakening with lies the heart of the righteous and preventing the wicked to repent and be saved (cf. Ez 13: 17-23): *"They speak of "peace!", and there is no peace; while people build up a wall, behold, they daub it with mud. [...] A hail of stones will fall, [...] the wall is knocked down"* (Ez 13: 10-11).

Often, then, faith is confused with sentimentality, devotionism, pietism, philanthropy, superstition, mercifulness, undertaking walks of life humanly fulfilling and socially shared, but far from seeking and building the kingdom of God, with the attainment of His righteousness (cf. Mt 6.24 to 34). Therefore, faith is founding and building the house of the personal life only and always on the Word of the Lord. You have faith only when you lead a life consistent with the Gospel. We cannot say to believe in the Word of God and then deny it with our behaviour. Only if the thoughts, words and deeds are in conformity to the Word of faith, service efforts towards the brothers are the fruit of a love that saves. A service capable not only to ensure the brethren material and spiritual benefits, but that it is a sign of the Father's mercy to whom we must always give glory (cf. Mt 5: 16). The works of faith are to promote adhesion to Christ, conversion to his Gospel, possibly also through the explicit invitation, because *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned [...] And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it"* (Mk 16,16.20). All that Christ has said and done has only one purpose: to make people believe in Him as the sent by the Father to offer salvation to all people, making himself salvation on the cross for all of humanity.

Pope Francis in his homily, referring to the book of Habakkuk, highlights how the prophet calls the right man to remain firm in the faith, whatever may happen, for he who does not have the uprightness of soul will certainly end up succumbing (cf . Ab 2.4). In this regard he says that God "*He does not indulge our desire” but “God changes the world by transforming our hearts, and this He cannot do without us. The Lord wants us to open the door of our hearts, in order to enter into our lives. And this act of opening to Him, this trust in Him is precisely ‘the victory that overcomes the world, our faith’ (1 Jn 5,4)" (Homily).*

If we really want to change the world, we must start with a personal change, each day conforming our heart and our mind to Christ and to his every wish. A convert can convert, a saint can sanctify, a redeemed may redeem, a saved can save, a virtuous can help you grow in virtue, as a Christified you can Christify. Likewise, an unconverted cannot convert, a non-saint cannot sanctify, an unredeemed cannot redeem and save, a vicious will teach how to cultivate immorality and depravity.

The Word of Jesus is the only law that must regulate the entire life of the believer, his love toward the neighbour, his service and his works of mercy. The true and authentic mercy of a man to a man can be based only and exclusively, on the Word of the Lord. Can you ever think of a genuine service to others without the observance of the Commandments and without a life placed in the Beatitudes? Can one love his wife or husband who lives in adultery? Can who steals and cheats give alms? Can you love a person against the laws that God has imprinted and sealed in the very nature of man? Can good be done to the brothers at the same time slandering and saying against them all kinds of evil?

Then, we can talk about faith, taking into due account the close connection of the same with the Word. He believes in God who believes in the Word of God. He believes in Christ who receives the whole Gospel of Christ. He believes in the Church who follows her as the teacher of the Word. Today we wished we had a Church "friend" of men, attentive only to the solutions of social problems, the earthly way. However, by doing so, whatever service risks becoming useless and sterile, if the Church in all her sons does not give the whole Christ and does not make of the other persona a disciple of the Lord.

Virgin Mary, as the Mother of the Redemption you want every one of your children, redeemed in Christ, to become way of true faith and sincere service to the neighbour. Help us to bring with life and works, in the "suburbs" of this world, all the Word and grace of your Son Jesus.

*Father Massimo Amelio*

**JESUS, REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM**

**(O.L. Christ the King of the Universe Year C)**

**YOU SHALL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL (2Sam 5,1-3)**

The Lord chose David as king and anointed him through the prophet Samuel. The action of the Lord is insufficient, it does not produce salvation if the people does not make his, God's choice. The tribes of Israel go to David and ask him to reign over them. This same rule also applies to Christ Jesus. The Father has made him the King, Lord, Saviour and Redeemer of man, Mediator of his grace, truth, word and eternal life. In Him and through Him he has decided to make every man his son of adoption, in the waters of baptism through the work of the Holy Spirit. All this divine wealth is wasted, made void, if the man, through faith in the Word of Jesus, does not get converted to Him, does not accept him as his truth, life, grace, holiness, justification, redemption, light and wisdom. If man does not welcome Christ in his Word, all the wealth of Christ is emptied of its power by him. He will never go back into real life.

**TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON (Col 1.12 to 20)**

That man welcomes or does not welcome Christ, that he loves or despises him, that he obeys or transgresses His Word, at the end of time we will all be in the eternal kingdom of the Son of God, of the Son of His Love. This is today's teaching of many. On the contrary, all Scripture, Old and New Testament, assert that today we must enter the kingdom of Christ and today you enter through the narrow way of conversion and faith in the Word. Stating instead that hell is empty and that all tomorrow will be in Heaven, we create hell on earth, because we make of the earth the kingdom of death, of every death and we consolidate the eternal hell, because for sure it will be packed, jam-packed with souls, because of this heresy destructive of all the revelation of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. He enters into the eternal kingdom of God who today enters the kingdom of Christ through faith and obedience to every Word of his Gospel.

**THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS (Luke 23.35-43)**

Christ did not come to free the man from the cross. He is the Messenger to teach every man how to transform the cross into redemption, salvation and powerful source of grace and love. He is the King from the cross. Whoever wants to break free from the cross is a follower of the prince of this world. It was he who suggested to the woman how to get freed from the cross of her humanity, subject to the will of God. The good thief does not know how Jesus will enter his kingdom, but he knows that if Jesus goes through the cross, he can also cross there without descending from it. From this faith in the kingdom which is reached by way of the cross, not coming down from it, the thief rises a prayer to Christ: *"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."* Jesus' answer is immediate: *"Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."* Jesus confirms the faith of the thief and rewards it for having he confessed before men, from the cross, as a crucified, the truth of the Saviour of mankind. Jesus came to teach us that the cross is the only way of life. The other ways invented by man are not of salvation.

**AT AN HOUR YOU DO NOT EXPECT, THE SON OF MAN WILL COME**

**(First Sunday of Advent Year A)**

**LET US WALK IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORD! (Is 2,1-5)**

The prophet Isaiah proclaims to his people that in the heart of men there will be one day a very strong desire that will drive them towards the God of Jacob. The prophecy will be fulfilled if whoever already believes in the Lord will show his powerful light just as it happened with Christ the Lord. The Eternal Son of the Father showed the light of God in his person and all the world, from all parts, flocked to him because he was attracted by his light. Today, this ministry of light belongs by vocation and mission to every disciple of Jesus. If the Christian becomes darkness, no one will be attracted through him. One attracts becoming light, you go to love on seeing love that overflows from the heart of the Christian. Without the burning desire of the Christian to become pure light, no one will ever come to light for him. The prophecy remains true forever. But it is necessary that the world sees the light to let itself be attracted by it.

**LET US PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT (Rm 13.11 to 14)**

Christians are called to abandon the works of darkness: drunkenness, impurity, lust, strife, jealousy, every vice, in order to be able to wear the armour of light, the precious virtues, each of which illuminates the world with its own special, peculiar splendour. The Christian must always walk clothed with Christ, in a very pure obedience of faith. Donning of obedience, charity, love, meekness, humility, compassion, the Christian will reveal to the world the whole light of salvation and redemption, will attest the powerful force of transformation of the man that there is in the Lord Jesus, in His grace and truth. Christ Jesus is not worn once and for all. He must be worn every day with an ever new and intense light. A day in which one turns his gaze elsewhere and no longer on Christ the Lord, the light begins to fade with the risk of dying out. One is no longer salvation for the world when he is no longer light.

**ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND ONE WILL BE LEFT (Mt 24.37-44)**

To every man is asked to always be ready, because the end comes without any warning. After death there is the judgment that will be of bliss or eternal curse. It is a final judgment. There is no amnesty, no reduction in his sentence. One is with God forever, if found in justice. He is without God for eternity, if found unjust, wicked, evil, unrepentant. Nor let one believe in fairy tales of "enlightened" theologians, who say that God's mercy embraces all. These do not even know what the Lord's mercy is. It is all the help of grace, truth, compassion, mercy, light, love, so that the man is converted and can achieve eternal life. If you die as a wicked person, you will remain wicked for eternity. The time of mercy ends with death. In eternity judgment comes and each will be judged according to his works. Otherwise, let us close the Gospel, let us close the Church, let us close the hierarchy, let us close the sacraments, let us close everything that is the fruit of Christ and let us do what we please. So in the end everything is acquitted, pardoned and forgiven by the mercy of God.

**CATANZARO: Inauguration of catechetical year and renewal of vows**

**of the Consecrated in the Association Mary Mother of the Redemption**

Monday, October 24, in the parish Mary Mother of the Church of Catanzaro, the Metropolitan Archbishop Msgr. Vincenzo Bertolone, with a concelebrated Mass, welcomed the renewal of temporary vows of 27 consecrated in the Secular Institute "Mary Mother of the Redemption", beginning the organic, systematic and permanent catechesis programmed by the Apostolic Movement. The theme of the event, read in the light of the Gospel of the Lord's Day, was The joy of love: the journey of families. Welcoming, accompanying, discerning and integrating.

This is an important moment for the life of the Institute and all the Apostolic Movement, of whose spirituality the Secular Institute is an integral part. The latter and the former come from the merciful heart of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, through Maria Marino who is their inspirer and founder, whose "obedience, which is pure following of the Lord Jesus to the cross, bears for the church and the world abundant fruit of heavenly blessings."

The celebration began with a greeting to the Archbishop from Father Francesco Brancaccio, the diocesan assistant of the Movement, who emphasized the ecclesial nature of this act (...). His greeting was followed by the one of the mistress of the novices, Anna Guzzi, who in the name of the consecrated blessed and thanked the Lord for the solicitude with which the bishop follows their mission (...).

Monsignor Bertolone, extending a fatherly greeting to the founder Maria Marino, to the Council, the consecrated and the entire association, highlighted that "joy is the distinctive feeling of whoever lives the Gospel and communicates it to others, with his face lit up and always serene as that of father Pino Puglisi even when he was killed. Announce - this is the wish of the Archbishop - with joy and passion, the Gospel, dear friends of the Apostolic Movement. Make sure that your every listener can meet the amiable gaze of Jesus that does not stop at the externals, but reads in each of us the true image of God. Help people to meet and to listen to what Jesus says, through the systematic catechesis, the practice of the sacraments and the works of mercy" (...).

On the theme that will guide the annual catechesis, in the light of the post-synod Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, the Archbishop Bertolone recalled that "the identity card of the dynamic and itinerant apostolate lies in mutual good will, in mutual forgiveness, in gestures of mercy, that imitate the way of doing of the Holy Spirit: in fact, it is from Charity in person, the Spirit, that the gestures of tenderness, reconciliation and mercy derive. This identity card, my dear ones - the prelate said - will be communicated, indeed "showed" by you this year as a catechetical comment of the joy of love, of the Amoris laetitia (the Joy of Love), that you will illustrate through the four verbs formulated by Pope Francis: "accompanying" with attention and care especially the most vulnerable children, marked by a hurt and bewildered love; "discerning" in some so named irregular "situations, so that you never think of reducing the demands of the Gospel"; "welcoming" and integrating, that is opening the door to everyone, that is, "understanding", "consoling", "integrating,"... without imposing a set of rules as if they were stones, thereby obtaining the effect of making them feel judged and abandoned by that very Mother who is called to bring them the mercy of God. "

*(Taken from an article published by the editors of Zenit.org)*

**DO NOT IRRITATE...**

Do not irritate the Lord your God.

Do not say, if the Lord does not say.

Do not proclaim

the wonders of men.

Do not make an idol of them.

The word of man is not God's word.

The Lord did not say it.

It is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

attributing to God what comes from the man.

you wonder:

How do I manage to understand it?

The Word of God is truth,

it is denying yourself,

it is taking up the cross and following him,

it is silence for the man,

it is putting God in first place.

The sign of God

is united to his word,

it is given so that the man

believes and is converted,

so that he returns to God

in the truth and sincerity of heart.

The sign of God

gives you Christ,

the whole of Christ,

the Church,

the Word,

the sacraments,

Peter and the Apostles,

prayer,

the work of mercy.

The sign of God is a prophetic mission:

Go...

Do not stop.

Proclaim the good and the bad,

death and life,

sin and grace,

justice and judgment,

his goodness and his forgiveness,

repentance and contrition of heart.

Go...

Proclaims the resurrection of the Lord

and his eternal Kingdom.

"Go into all the world,

preach the Gospel to every creature ".

***Marino Maria***