**Year XXXIII n. 25 December 4, 2016**

**For a child is born to us**

The Messiah of the Lord is proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah as a great light that comes to illuminate the world lying in darkness: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone"*. With these same words St. Matthew gives beginning to the public life of Jesus, after the temptations in the desert. He is the only light that can break, shatter the wall of darkness that will always envelop the world. Either enveloped by the light of Jesus or by darkness.

The light of Jesus is Jesus himself, the eternal, divine light, in the flesh that is born for us. The mystery is so heralded by the prophecy: "*For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counsellor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, From David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains By judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!*" (cf. Is 9,1-6). The eternal, divine, uncreated Light is in the flesh and it is given to us by the flesh. The Light is this Child that is born for us.

Only this Child is Light for every man, for He alone is born for us. God has not set up any other child, and no other light was, is and will be born. The Light in the flesh was given to us. From the flesh it has illuminated the world. The light was crucified in the flesh. It is true! Jesus was crucified in the flesh, but his flesh forever remains home, seat and source of his Light. The mystery accomplished in Jesus must be accomplished in every disciple.

By eternal generation, the Father has given all his light to the Only Son. With the Light of the Father, from the flesh, in the flesh, the Son came into the land of darkness to illuminate it with eternal Light. With the crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, He is no longer in the visible flesh. From the invisible flesh, also transformed into light, he can no longer illuminate the world. He now needs the visible flesh. In the Holy Spirit, in Him, with Him, through Him, he constituted his Body which is the Church, flesh from which, his light of truth, justice and most pure manifestation of the will of the Father pour forth upon the earth, that lies in darkness. In the Church, every disciple receives, is covered with the light of Christ and he pours it out from his body and from his flesh.

The light with which the Christian must illuminate the world, is not a light that he can draw out of him. With the light that is outside of him he is the one that can be illuminated, but with it he cannot enlighten the world. It is a light out of his flesh, it is not light from his flesh and in the flesh. The disciple of Jesus draws, for the Holy Spirit, every day more light in the Word and in the grace of the Lord Jesus, always as a body of the Church, he transforms it into light in the flesh and from the flesh he might always enlighten the world. If this *"incarnation"* of the light of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is not fulfilled in him, for him no darkness will be rent asunder and for him humanity will lie forever in falsehood, lie, hatred, stupidity, ignorance, pride and every other vice.

The Word was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and from her flesh, the light was spread over all the earth. The light of Christ, through the uninterrupted work of the Holy Spirit, becomes flesh, body of the Christian, in the Church and with it the disciple can illuminate the world. Christ Jesus became flesh once and became light in the flesh forever. The Christian instead is made eternally the body of Christ, but he becomes light in the flesh moment by moment, second by second. It suffices a moment and from light he turns into darkness, he can no longer light the world, because he no longer shines as light. He has become darkness. The Christian is always tempted so that he separates from the body of Christ which is the Church. Instantly he becomes darkness. The light is drawn in the body of the Church and from the body of the Church. The Church is the bestower and the administrator of the grace and truth of Jesus.

Everyone gives light to the extent that his flesh becomes light of grace and truth. If the flesh is in darkness, you can recite the Holy Scriptures by heart, you can talk with every theological language the truth of Christ, you can repeat all the higher truths elaborated by the Fathers of the Church or by the Great theologians of the Middle Ages, but all this is not light that illuminates the world, because it is not light that turned into light the body of the disciple of Jesus. The mystery of Christ: light in the flesh, light from the flesh is the mystery of the Christian: light in the flesh, light from the flesh, drawn from the body of Christ which is the Church, remaining body of the Church, live branch of this one and only true vine.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, in your bosom the non-created, eternal Light, became created light to be poured out into the world in the flesh and from the flesh. Mother of God, help every disciple of Jesus, so that by drawing the body of Christ in the Eucharist, transforms with it his own body into flesh of light. Only his flesh and never ours might be the flesh of light and the light in the flesh. Only his flesh in us might illuminate the world, showing it all the beauty of eternal life. You, Holy Mother, help us and in Christ we will become his eternal light.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

***"To have experienced the merciful gaze of Jesus"***

*Reflections from the Speech of H.H. Francis at the International Convention of vocation pastoral (21/10/2016)*

The Vocation pastoral, noted the Pope in his speech, is not to be understood only as a pastoral office but must essentially "bring to the encounter with the Lord." When you meet him, you live "the decisive encounter" since Christ illuminates human existence, pulling it out from everything that keeps it as a slave in this world, making it free and "in love with the Master." Every pastoral action, in its specific, must presuppose at the basis of its provisions and its methods, the encounter with Jesus, since his truth is the only one that can give full meaning and the right orientation to human life.

Not surprisingly, the Pontiff said, the motto chosen by the Congress, "Miserando atque eligendo," referring to the Gospel episode of the calling of Matthew the tax collector, reminds him of his own experience, the moment of his vocation. This, he added, "did not occur as a result of a conference or a nice theory, but for having experienced the merciful gaze of Jesus on me." That's why you have to learn the style of Jesus, he continued, who unhurriedly goes everywhere, in places of everyday life, looking at the men with eyes of mercy to call them to follow him. Three are the verbs that the Pope wanted to take into account to explain the dynamics of vocation: *going out, seeing and calling.*

***Going out***: vocational pastoral needs a Church in movement. This is not a matter of an exit without coordinates or of a hectic job, let alone a tirelessly hectic work, but of an exit from the rigid settings that often keep us closed in the "convenient pastoral criterion of the “it has always been done so" (Evangelii gaudium, 33)." Our inflexible choices sometimes prevent us from contemplating other ways that the Spirit shows as new roads, with the end of "animating a pastoral of the encounter and of spending time to welcome and listen to all, especially the young."

***Seeing***: The Lord's call requires to man the possibility to see, observe and examine everything in depth. In this sense, seeing becomes almost synonymous of stopping and thinking. When Jesus passed on people's road, he stopped and crossed the other's gaze, without haste. That was what made "his call attractive and charming." Making eye contact with Jesus meant succeeding, almost, being seen in a consistent manner through his pure eyes. His preferential gaze gave people to better understand themselves. Unfortunately, today, the haste and speed of stimuli to which we are subjected not always give way to that inner silence to pause a bit with the Lord through prayer and meditation. It is a risk of all "pastors and pastoral workers overtaken by hurry, overly concerned about the things to do, that are likely to fall into an empty organizational activism, unable to stop and meet the people." Like the gaze of Jesus for Matthew the tax collector, so must be the look of every shepherd be concerning the souls entrusted to him: "careful, unhurried, able to stop and read in depth, to enter into the life of the other without ever making him feel either threatened or judged." It's a look that requires discernment, spiritual guidance, conscience enlightenment, without ever seeking to control the hidden work of God's grace. On this particular point, the Pope urges pastors to oversee a lot, especially on priestly vocations, asking them "discernment in truth, shrewd and cautious look, without superficiality or shallowness", before their entering the seminary. The Church and the world need mature, balanced priests, capable of closeness, listening and mercy.

The Pope urged all pastors to take care of young people and reminded the priests that their vocation was also the result of an encounter that changed their lives, when "another priest - the parish priest, the confessor and the spiritual director – made you experience the beauty of the love of God." That's why young people need to be listened to with patience and help them to discern the movements of their hearts, directing their steps. It is not possible for a priest, isolate himself, "closing himself in the safe fortress of the rectory, the sacristy or the restricted group "of the loyal ones”." On the contrary, we are called to be pastors among the people, capable of animating a pastoral of the encounter and of spending time to welcome and listen to all, especially the young.

***Calling***: is the typical verb of the Christian vocation. Jesus is not addressing Matthew with enticing words or presenting him a "readymade" ideal program, but relies on the Holy Spirit, who knew well that, in that singular circumstance, many words were not needed, but a simple invitation: *"Follow me»*. The call of Jesus was always accompanied and supported by the most pure grace arising from the holiness of his life. Such grace, in Him, was attractive because it generated in people that "charm" of following him and changing their lives. That's why, today, especially the shepherds, beyond their different programs or vocational paths, need to rediscover in their lives the attractive action of grace that, like in Jesus, is able to "put people on the move, shake them from a lethal sedentary lifestyle and break the illusion that one can live happily remaining in the comfort of his own safety. "

The Pope concluded his speech by stressing that the Lord is the one who puts in the hands of the priests the care of those who aspire to a vocational choice to priesthood: "To your pastoral action, to your discernment and your prayers is entrusted the vocational pastoral." We must not be afraid to proclaim the Gospel, to dialogue with today's youth, offering them, even explicitly, 'that it is beautiful to follow the Lord and give Him your life forever."

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, inspire so much holiness in priests, so that their witness becomes, for many young people, a source of a generous "yes" to Christ.

***Father Alessandro Carioti***

**REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!**

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

**A SHOOT SHALL SPROUT FROM THE STUMP OF JESSE (Is 11.1 to 10)**

Hope is born in the man from a Word that the Lord makes reach his heart. Where the Word is not given, no hope might ever be born. The people is in dissolution, the result of his idolatry and immorality. He is a tree with no more life. To these people the Lord echoes a word. From the stump of Jesse a shoot shall sprout. It will be the salvation of its people. It will not be him for his human qualities. Never might ever any hope be born from the man. He will be the one, because the Spirit of the Lord in fullness will rest on him. The Spirit of God in him will be the one to renew the people and to give it real life again. The Spirit alone will not be the one, it will be the Spirit in the shoot that sprouts from the root of Jesse. Here is the true source of hope: the Spirit in the Messiah of God, the Messiah of God filled with the Holy Spirit. The real hope is both the result of the Messiah and of the Spirit of the Lord on the Messiah.

**WE MIGHT HAVE HOPE (Rm15,4-9)**

Disciple of Jesus is whoever keeps hope alive, staying in the Spirit of God, that is the eternal life-giver of the hope that is born from the Word of the Lord. If the Christian is separated from the Holy Spirit, the living Word instantly dies in his heart and the living hope dies, too. Living word, live Spirit, living hope and the Christian in the Holy Spirit must be one. But all is from the Christian that remains alive in the living Spirit and the living Word. The separation of the Christian from the living Word, because he is separated from the live Spirit, for his disobedience to the living Word, makes him dead in the heart and mind and never might he be the giver of life. Without the gift of life, no hope might be either preached or built in a heart. Hope is certainty of life, today on earth and tomorrow in the holy heavens, with God. The Christian in the live Spirit, in the live Word of God, is the only true builder of live and real hope.

**THE ONE WHO IS COMING AFTER ME IS MIGHTIER THAN I (Mt 3,1-12)**

John preaches moral conversion, because it makes the theological, eschatological, Christological and messianic conversion possible. The Messiah that comes must be welcomed as the perfect, final, pure Word of God for every man. Even for us moral conversion is urgent, if we want the Gospel, grace, truth, ministry, charisma and the Church to be in us and for us. We get converted to the observance of the Commandments, we enter in obedience to the Law God, the heart becomes available to every other conversion. If the heart remains in sin, with no moral conversion, it is difficult to be converted to any other truth. Each Christian is asked a true missionary conversion. Even this conversion is impossible without first working the moral conversion. You enter in the grace, you live in truth, the Holy Spirit might move us according to his will. No theological or missionary or Christological, or sacramental, or ministerial conversion will be possible, if the moral conversion is missing, which is very pure obedience to the commandments of the Law of the Lord.

**BEHOLD, I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU**

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

**STRENGTHEN THE HANDS THAT ARE FEEBLE (Is 35,1-6a.10)**

The Lord asks each of his children to be made help for those who are weak, fragile, insecure in their faith, hope and charity. The people of God is made up of strong and weak persons in faith, of bold and timid hearts, of calloused hands and feeble. It is up to those who are strong, bold, with rough and calloused hands, expert in every work of faith, to help those who are weak, fearful, frail. The People of God begins when the rich supports the poor, the strong helps the weak, the daring gives support to the fearful and the expert in the evangelical work is made wise teacher, attentive, learned by of whoever does not even know what the Gospel is. The strong is converted to weak and becomes his support. The weak is converted to the strong and lets himself be supported, recognizing his smallness and fragility. This is the humility necessary to the weak and the strong, to those who believe and those who do not believe. Without this humility, everyone will walk his own way. the true path of conversion to the other is missing.

**MAKE YOUR HEARTS FIRM (James 5.7 to 10)**

The heart is revived resting it on the solid foundation of hope. What the Lord said, will be fulfilled infallibly for us. If it is fulfilled, you must just wait. If I am in the Word, the Word will be fulfilled for me. If I go out of the Word, the Word will be fulfilled equally, but not according to its promise of eternal life, but according to its threats of eternal death. The Christian must live with only one principle of faith in his heart and in his mind: *"Never has any word of God fallen into emptiness. Every word was accomplished by him."* This is the only certainty on which the Christian might base hope. Who wants to educate to hope, must always educate to the true faith. Who does not educate to the true faith, never might he form to hope. He lacks the solid foundation on which to place it. Hope is the expectation that every Word of God will be fulfilled for him. It will be fulfilled because the God who has said it is the God that carries it out.

**HE WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY (Mt 11,2-11)**

The nature of the Messianism of Jesus the Lord must not be looked at what he does or what the people expected, but only in Scripture. He came to fulfil all the prophecies about the Messiah of the Lord. Read well, understood in the Holy Spirit, the prophecies never talk about kingdoms conquests, but of man's liberation from all bondage. Jesus is the Messiah, but not according to the expectations of men, based on erroneous, incomplete, poor, manipulated interpretations of prophecy. He is the true Messiah according to the purest will of the Father. This truth of Christ is true today and always for every ministry and charisma in the Church. No one can give to his ministry and his charisma achievements after his own heart, or in accordance with the expectations of men. In the Church, in the Gospel, the grace, everything has to be from the purest will of the Father. Everything must be done according to the Word. Ministry, grace, charisma and Word produce fruits of eternal life, only if lived in the Spirit, according to the Spirit. Lived by man, according to the man, they bring fruits of death.

**Salerno - Life of the Apostolic Movement**

**(From the report on the pastoral year 2015-16)**

Welcomed in the parish *Santa Maria of the Martyrs* by the parish priest Father Francis Carmelita, the Order of the Minimums of Saint Francis of Paola, this year the group of Salerno has also gained the experience of meetings of catechesis offered by the Apostolic Movement. Together with Father Giuseppe Comi and Father Massimo Amelio, old and new members were able to compare with the Word, open to dialogue and acquire new awareness in the path of faith.

Each, according to charismas and gifts received, continues to offer his commitment in different parish Salernitan realities, variously collaborating with priests through the activities of extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, organist, catechist and responsible of communications. But the effort is also that of being salt of the earth and light of the world in everyday family life, at work, facing the fragility of our neighbour, living in a concrete way the call to personal holiness that runs through every evangelical proposal.

The Jubilee Year proclaimed by the Holy Father was an opportunity to ponder on the untiring mercy of the Lord and rediscover his paternal healing, refreshing and enriching embrace. Faced with the wounds that humanity does not cease to inflict to itself for the remoteness from the divine heart, the image proposed by Pope Francis of a Church *field hospital after a battle* and the exhortation to move from the first of all proclamations: Jesus Christ has saved you! ,echoed.

The urgency of conversion and mission has also emerged in the light of the work of the 14th General Ordinary Synod on the Family, in which the centrality of the latter with respect to new political and social sensitivity that aim at making it a side and negotiable institution, far from the Creator's plan, is reaffirmed. The widespread insecurity of wedding bonds and personal relationships spurs, in this historical phase, to a renewed confidence in the teaching of Christ, that is the rock on which to build the house and a powerful voice that calms the storm.

With the desire to live the atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm, we hope soon to renew our participation in the meetings of prayer and spirituality in the Mary Mother of the Church parish, in Catanzaro. The affectionate fraternity of the central seat has always been a source of momentum for the personal and community journey.

Called by the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, to remind and proclaim the word of her Son Jesus, we invoke her aid and sweet presence in order to become credible instruments of her love and truth seeds in the world territory.

***The Apostolic Movement of Salerno***

**GO... JESUS IS THERE...**

Go...

Succour the brother that suffers.

Jesus is there.

Go...

Be istructed in the Word of the Lord.

Go...

Deny yourself and take the cross.

Go...

Feed, in the house of the Lord,

on the Body and Blood of the Son of Man.

Go...

Repent and believe in the Gospel.

Go...

Man,

do not proclaim your word,

do not tell your history,

not to say your wonders,

do not look for the golden calf.

Man,

the Lord leads you to salvation,

to the sacraments and the law in its entirety.

Freely you received, freely give.

Do not make the market. It is sin.

Man,

the Lord wants the heart conversion,

the listening to his voice,

submission to the faith of the Church,

to Peter, the Pope, the Apostles, the Bishops,

to Presbyters, the Priests, their co-workers.

Go...

Fill the house of the Father.

The Lord does not love idolatry,

does not love those who use him as a shield

to proclaim lies and falsehoods.

It is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Meditate, man.

You will perish in the Gehenna.

Get converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He alone died on the cross.

Only to him the power and the glory forever.

O Mary, Mother of the Redemption, intercede!

Come quickly to save the world from so much wickedness,

from so much deceit and so much marketing,

from so many idols and so many false prophets.

***Maria Marino***