**Year XXXIII n. 26 December 18, 2016**

**A child is born to us**

Isaiah sees a people that walks in darkness, in the absence of any eternal truth on God and on man, in the ethical dark because it is a terribly spiritual darkness. It is always like this. When man enters spiritual darkness, darkness instantly becomes ethical. Lacking the divine path, never might there be a human path. The man decides to abolish every transcendent, revealed truth, erasing from history the very Author of all supernatural truth about man. The consequences cannot but be an ethical suffocating, murderous and destructive darkness. That the spiritual darkness, for lack of any eternal truth, is devouring humanity, is attested by the folly of giving the right to justice to every ethical darkness.

Isaiah sees the man in the dark and proclaims that a great light will shine on him. A cosmic event will be fulfilled in our humanity. The great light that is about to illuminate every man, is born in the littleness of a child, it is given in the humility of a child that comes to light. Most amazing thing is that the light shines entirely from his crucified body, hanged by men on a hardwood. Oddities of the eternal wisdom of the Father. While men seek light in the great, powerful, lords and in the enlightened people of this world, the Creator of man has set light of the nations, of the Gentiles and of his people, a humble child that is born in a grotto and that then tomorrow will be nailed on a cross.

Faith demands the sacrifice of all intelligence, wisdom and knowledge that come from flesh. It demands full abandonment to the Word of the Lord. Without the sacrifice of our mind, never might there be seen in a child the light of the world and never in a Crucifix the highest revelation of the truth of the man: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, 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!"* (Is 8,23b-9.6).

The light of God is this child that is born. It is his Word, his life, his example and his death. It is all that He has said and done, every moment of his existence on earth. God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, did not give any other lights. This child is not like the sunlight that shines on us. His is a particular light. It is not drawn from Him, but in Him. You cannot live it without Him, but in Him, with Him, for Him. He is the light and the grace that makes us live the light. He is the real life and also the force that makes us stay in the light, that makes us be the light of his light, in his light. It does not come to us in a direc­t, but in an indirect way. It comes from those who have become, everyday become light of the light, light that leads and introduces, admits and submerges in the light of Christ the Lord. If a man does not become light in the light, light from light, light of the light of Christ, never might he illuminate a single person and never might he lead anyone to Christ Jesus. If the heart does not turn from darkness into light, there is no possibility that from darkness anyone can be attracted to the light of Christ. Darkness attracts to darkness, light attracts to light.

The world walks from darkness to darkness. Is it possible to break this wall of spiritual darkness, which has become an ethical darkness of universal death? Today the path is the Christian that is clothed with the light of Christ and in Him. It is the Christian that is manifested to the world as the light of love, truth, righteousness, holiness, compassion, mercy, perfect obedience to the Commandments of the Eternal Law and the Divine Word of the Lord Christ. The written Gospel reveals what light is and what light is not. It does not attract to the light. The Christian in Christ, who takes on Christ's light attracts into the light: the light of truth and obedience, the light of crucified charity and infinite love and the light of loyalty to every Word of the Lord Christ.

Today the Christian has left the ethic light of Christ Jesus, because he separated from the spiritual light. This is attested by the continued devastation that he makes of the Word of Jesus. It is the Word of Jesus that reveals us what light is and what light is not. If the Christian separates from the light of the Word, he lacks in discernment, he confuses light with darkness, lets himself be attracted by darkness and abandons the light. Once abandoned the spiritual light, he will necessarily abandon the moral light. From moral darkness the Word of Jesus will always be deleted, giving it meanings that it does not have. This is the problem to be solved today: is the Word of Jesus still true in its perfect discernment and in the clear separation between light and darkness? Having loosened this knot, everyone will know whether he is in light or in darkness, and if he wants, he can become true light in this Child that is born.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, you always have walked from light to light, and from truth to truth. Ensure that we, too, walk from light to light in the Word of Jesus. Thus we will be true servants of our God. We will be light in Christ.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

**The path to unity**

From the Speech of H.H. Francis to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (10/10/2016)

"The unity of Christians is an essential requirement of our faith." It is with these words that the Holy Father Francis, in conformity with the teachings of Vatican II (cf Council Decree UR), with the magisterium of John Paul II (cf. Encyclical Letter Ut unum sint) and Benedict XVI, addressed the participants to the plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian unity, to reiterate how ecumenism, the quest for Christian unity, is one of his "main concern", hoping that it becomes "increasingly shared by all the baptized».

This need, "gushes from the depth of our being believers in Christ Jesus. We call for unity, because we invoke Christ. We want to live the unity, because we want to follow Christ, live his love, enjoy the mystery of his being one with the Father, which is then the essence of divine love." Here is presented the centrality of the ecumenical project: being "in union with Christ and in Christ," "being conformed to him (cf. Rom 8:28)" "living in Him (Gal 2:20)" in order to be in the love of the Blessed Trinity, source, model and goal of our unity: "what we wish is unity in the love of the Father that is given to us in Jesus Christ, a love that also informs thinking and doctrines." This "unity of love" is "the soul that supports also the study sessions and every other type of effort to reach more closely spaced point of views" among Christians and that requires a continuous "personal and community conversion." We must achieve this unity with Christ to "grow in communion among ourselves." Jesus Christ prayed, in the Holy Spirit for this unity in love of his disciples: "As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us [...] I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one so that the world may know that you sent me and have loved them as you loved me [...] So that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them" (Jn 17,21.23.26).

Clarified the purpose of the ecumenical path, to achieve the unity of love of all the baptized with the Father in Christ Jesus, Pope Francis is preparing to "unmask some false models of communion", simultaneously indicating a way to achieve it. His holiness first of all recalls that unity "*is not the result of our human efforts* or a product built by ecclesiastical diplomacy, but it is a gift from above. We humans are not able to build unity alone, nor can we decide on the forms and times." Our task is that of "welcoming" and "making visible" the gift. Unity, "before being a goal it is a journey, with its schedules and its rhythms, its delays and its acceleration and even its pauses. Unity as a journey requires patient waits, tenacity, effort and commitment; it does not eliminate the conflicts and does not clear the contrasts, indeed, it can sometimes result in exposure to new misunderstandings." However, it is a path that is run along together, "by those who decide to get on the way towards a goal that today could seem distant," with all the uncertainties of the journey, but in the awareness of being comforted "by the continuous experience of a glimpsed joyful communion, although not yet fully achieved."

The path also excludes non-appropriate modes: in fact "*unity is not uniformity*. The different theological, liturgical, spiritual and canonical traditions, that have developed in the Christian world, when they are genuinely rooted in the apostolic tradition, are an asset, not a threat to the unity of the Church". Therefore, in the ecumenical path, "legitimate diversities" must not be "suppressed" but "respected" and brought to "overcome irreconcilable differences with the unity that God requires."

Another principle to keep in mind the ecumenical journey is that *"unity is not absorption"*, which requires to "deny the personal history of faith" or tolerates "proselytizing." There is something that unites us, as "Sacred Scripture and the great professions of faith of the early Ecumenical councils," faith "in the one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," the common commitment "to seek ways to obey today the Word of God that wants us united"; a word "that demands to be listened to, accepted and witnessed in the world." "The various Christian communities are called not "to compete with each other", but "to work together" in all those areas to which the word of God leads us.

In short, the journey is accomplished in what unites us, "and what bond unites all of us Christians more than the experience of being sinners but at the same time the object of the infinite mercy of God revealed to us by Jesus Christ? Likewise, the unity of love is already a reality when those whom God has chosen and called to form his people together announce the wonders he has done for them, especially by offering a testimony of life, full of love for all people (cf. *1Pt* 2 , 4-10)."

Therefore, "unity is made on journey." The Holy Father likes to say that "when we walk together, that is, we meet as brothers, pray together, work together in proclaiming the Gospel and in service to the least we are already united." He is moved by the certainty that "all the theological and ecclesiological differences that still divide Christians will be surpassed only along this path, without we today knowing how and when, but it will happen according to what the Holy Spirit will want to suggest for the good of the Church".

Therefore, the Holy Father reiterates the need to continue in the ecumenical path, which is an *essential requirement of our faith*, but also *a strong and intense desire of communion* that he has been able to experience in *many significant ecumenical meetings* that he experienced. He does not hide the difficulties, but he is adamant that "the continued existence of these differences must not paralyze us, but drive us to seek together ways to successfully face these obstacles." The certainty moves him that "if we let ourselves be guided by the Spirit, the richness, the variety and the diversity never become conflict, because He urges us to live the variety in the communion of the Church."

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, help us to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to understand the need for unity, to take to the road together with our brothers, to cooperate in the witness of Christ's love, to show the communion in the commitment for the gospel, continually getting converted to its needs, to realize, in Christ, unity in love, in history and in eternity.

Father Gesualdo De Luca

**THIS CHILD HAS BEEN CONCEIVED IN HER**

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

**THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON (Is 7.10 to 14)**

Ahaz is a king without any faith in his God. He sees him as an ineffective, useless and vain presence, without any strength for the salvation of his people. That is why he denies the covenant with Him, His mighty Saviour and Lord and makes a pact with Egypt. It is an act of high treason. He denies God and trusts in man. Isaiah invites Ahaz to seek a sign of the closeness and omnipotence of his God. Ahaz refuses, saying he does not want to try the Lord. He is not the one to ask for a sign. It is the Lord who wants to offer it to him and he offers it to him: it is the Emmanuel, the son of the virgin that conceives and gives birth. This sign is accomplished in fullness in the Son of the Virgin Mary. Who wants to see how close, great and omnipotent, his God is, he must only see it in this child born of the Virgin. God is all in this Child and out of Him, God will never be revealed, manifested and give himself to man.

**DESCENDED FROM DAVID ACCORDING TO THE FLESH (Rm 1,1-7)**

Jesus is the true Son of God, being generated of the Father, light from light, true God from true God. He is also a true son of David according to the flesh. He is consubstantial with God and consubstantial with man, true birth from God before time, in eternity, true birth from the flesh, from the pure womb of his Mother. The birth of Jesus is a unique birth. He was born from God, only from God, in the Holy Spirit, by divine generation in eternity. He was born of a Woman, only from a Woman, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in time. Jesus is without divine Mother in eternity. He is without earthly father in time. This dual birth is the essence of Christ. Denying one birth, it is declaring Jesus non Messiah of the Lord, because God's Messiah, according to the prophecy, is the son begotten of the Father in eternity and the son generated by a Woman in time. Joseph is real father of adoption. He has given birth to Jesus in his spirit and in his soul.

**YOU ARE TO NAME HIM JESUS (Mt 1.18 to 24)**

Mary and Joseph give to God everything of themselves for the greater good of Jesus. The Father asks them that their body, soul and spirit be placed for the exclusive service of Jesus. Mary must conceive without knowing Joseph. Joseph will have to take Mary as his bride without ever knowing her, because her body is not Mary’s, but of the Lord. They are asked the purest obedience. Joseph will have to take Mary. He must become her husband and be the father of Jesus in the spirit. He will not conceive him with the body, he will have to conceive him in his heart, in his soul, in his will, in his thoughts and desires. Christ Jesus will have to be the son of his soul and his spirit, he will have to carry the traits of his soul; it also to be delivered entirely at the total and exclusive service of the Son. Joseph obeys. He takes Mary as his bride. He gives the name to the Child. He makes him his true Son of the soul and spirit. He hands himself over to the service of the Mother and the Son, that from this moment on, for spiritual conception, is his true Son, the true Son of David and the true Messiah.

**THE GLORY AS OF THE FATHER'S ONLY SON**

**(Nativity of the Lord)**

**THE LORD COMFORTS HIS PEOPLE (Is 52.7 to 10)**

Israel, enslaved among the nations, is the figures of the whole of humanity, steeped in sin and by it made a prisoner of the prince of this world. Salvation, liberation, light, peace and joy, are in the return of man to his truth, they are a gift from the Lord. When does Israel become a free people? When he returns to be the truth of the truth of his God, the light of his light and love of his love. Of man is the work of his perdition. Of the Lord is the work of salvation. There is no consolation for the man if not in the return to the truth of his origin: being and living in the image and likeness of his God, recomposing the man and the woman the unity of love and truth. The return to the truth is only a gift, grace and work of the Creator. Either man welcomes his true God to live of Him and in Him, or he is condemned to eternal slavery. Today the Lord comforts and frees through Christ Jesus, through the mediation of grace and truth of the Church.

**YOU ARE MY SON; THIS DAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU (Heb 1.1 to 6)**

Jesus, in his eternal essence, is the radiation of the glory of the Father and an imprint of His substance. Whoever wants to know God, can know Him only in, through and with Him. Out of Him, there is partial, incomplete, inadequate and incipient knowledge of the Father. On the contrary, He is the Father's full light and absolute certainty in the truth. He is the Word that reveals the Father in His omnipotence, truth, justice and holiness. The word that does not reveal the omnipotence of God, is ineffective with regard to the gift of salvation. The word that does not convey all knowledge, truth and wisdom of the Father, certainly is not the word of true redemption. Who wants to have a word like that of Christ, can only draw it in Christ, abiding in his truth and making it his own law, light, justice, judgment, wisdom and intelligence. As Jesus is irradiation and imprint of the Father, so the Christian must be irradiation and imprint of Jesus in history.

**AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH (John 1,1-18)**

From the beginning, in eternity, before creation, the Word is God, before God, toward God. The divinity of Jesus is his being consubstantial with the Father, with God. Instead, through him all things were made. Without Him nothing was made of all that exists. Of all that was done, He is the principle of life and light. The Word becomes flesh and comes to live among us. Who lives among us is the Word made flesh to give us the grace and truth. But the Incarnate Word is the Only Son of the Father. The Eternal Word made flesh is the Son of the Most Mighty. The Son is the only one who sees the Father and knows him. He is in the bosom of the Father and therefore he is the only one that can reveal him to men. All others speak of the Father, by hearsay, but not with science and direct knowledge. Jesus speaks by knowledge of nature. Anyone can give some light on God, but only pale, dim and dull light. Jesus comes to lead, immerse the man in the truth of God and give him every grace so that he can live in the light of the Father and from it produce every fruit of eternal life.

**Bologna - the Apostolic Movement Life**

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

The Apostolic Movement operates in Bologna in various parishes, but that where it has been present longer is St. Mary and St. Dominic of Mascarella, where the meetings of spirituality and catechesis are held on a monthly basis. Moreover, we have also been for years, part of the Diocesan Council for Youth Ministry and members of the choir of youth ministry.

On 12 December 2015, we have accompanied the entry and settlement of our new bishop, Msgr. Matteo Zuppi. On this occasion, we had the pleasure of exchanging a few words with him, revealing him the filial affection of the Apostolic Movement, that he had already known as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Rome. In the following months, we continued to see him and to listen attentively to his teachings, by participating in various events over which he presided.

Having viewed the call of the Jubilee by the Holy Father Francis, we offered this year a series of reflections on "#Mercy: a journey into the heart of the Father". Father David Marino has given an innovative spirit to meetings. With the precious collaboration of the youth of the parish, therefore we did our best to build a format, in which the catechesis on the Word could tangle with the forms of art (music, song, poetry, painting, dance, drama). This allowed us to grow in communion and fraternal friendship and to reach many new people, that also came from other areas of Emilia Romagna. A new feature this year was the opportunity to ask the questions also in writing and anonymously, through cards we distributed. This has allowed many to overcome their shyness and each time the questions we received were really many.

We keep with joy in our hearts the memory of the meeting with the President, Cesare Rotundo - whom some of us had already met on the occasion of the International Convention of the Movement April 20, in Rome - that May 15 has come to visit us, sharing his experience of faith.

Let us thank the Lord for Father David, who reminding the Word in a simple and direct way, was able to fully answer all questions and to help us understand the importance of persevering in prayer, in the personal knowledge of the Gospel, in Christian formation, in the works of mercy and in the proclamation of the Word.

A big thanks also to Mons. Alessandro Benassi, pastor of Mascarella, who appreciated our work, manifesting repeatedly esteem and confidence and strongly urging us to continue with this form of evangelization. For this, again next year, the Apostolic Movement in collaboration with the Parish will offer a series of reflections on the theme "Today I do not have a God ... Speaking of God in the time of unbelief". We present this new commitment to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, so that She accompanies us with her maternal gaze and assists us with her intercession in the work of remembrance of the Word, in which we want to persevere on the example of our inspirer.

*The responsible adherents, Antonio Barone and Amelia Previte*

*The secretary, Lucia Brodosi*

Upcoming events in the Parish of Mascarella: 01/15/2017; 12/2; 12/3, 2/4; 7/5; 11/6, 6 p.m.

**YOUR GROTTO...**

You had to be born,

O Jesus,

and already the man feared you.

It did not know,

it does not know that you,

O Jesus,

were and are the world salvation.

So much did your Mama, suffer,

to give you to the light...

Only a grotto...

Yet you could have been born

in a palace.

You gave us,

O Jesus,

an example of humility and poverty.

You gave us your life.

Jesus,

do not you see?

We are miserable.

We do not look at your grotto

like a wealth, but like a misery...

Jesus,

give peace to the world.

We ask it of you

along with your Mom.

Ensure that we get converted

and that our hardened hearts may be softened

to pass from darkness to light.

Jesus,

Save us from the snares of the evil one.

Only with you near

we can have joy and love.

Help children to grow up like you,

in holiness and righteousness before God and men.

Ensure that the world believes

that you are the incarnate Word,

the Eternal Logos,

the Only Son of the Father

that comes into the world and into our hearts

to inflame us with your divine love,

so that we sing

together with the Angels

the glory of the Lord.

"Glory, Glory to God in the highest."

***Maria Marino***