**Year XXXIV n. 4 February 12, 2017**

**Down you go to the recesses of the pit!**

All the prophets of the living God proclaim to the pagan nations that they will be judged by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that today, in the truest faith, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every people will be visited by him. To each will be rewarded according to his deeds. In the times Isaiah Babylonian felt great, invincible, unbeatable and all-powerful. His king thought to be a god. The Lord God Almighty warns him. There is no future for you if not in the depths of hell. Your arrogance will end.

*"The nether world below is all astir preparing for your coming; It awakens the shades to greet you, all the leaders of the earth; It has the kings of all nations rise from their thrones. All of them speak out and say to you, "You too have become weak like us, you are the same as we. Down to the nether world your pomp is brought, the music of your harps." How have you fallen from the heavens, O morning star, son of the dawn! How are you cut down to the ground, you who mowed down the nations! You said in your heart: "I will scale the heavens; Above the stars of God I will set up my throne; I will take my seat on the Mount of Assembly, in the recesses of the North. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will be like the Most High!" Yet down to the nether world you go to the recesses of the pit!"* (Is 14.4 to 17).

Jesus, true prophet of his Father in our history, also proclaims to every man that tomorrow he will have to appear before him to give an account of even a single word, uttered in vain, said with arrogance, lies, deceit, deception, superficiality, negligence and foolishness. Of all spiritual and material good received, you will have to account for at the time of judgement before every other man. All will be judged publicly. Who is righteous will be welcomed into his kingdom. He that is unjust will be removed forever from the eternal joy.

Our God, the living and true God, Our Christ, the Christ of God, made up by the Father his universal Mediator and Judge of the living and the dead, are one truth, one prophecy and one proclamation. The history of mankind begins on earth with a prophecy of life and death. The man chose death. The history of each person opens to eternity again with a life and death prophecy. To everyone the choice of life or death, which will be death in the lake of fire, life in the rooms of light of the eternal home of the Lord of glory.

A second agent enters history, he too with a word of prophecy. But his word is contrary to that of the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of man. This false prophecy undoes all the good words of the good prophecy of God. This agent, that is called the devil and Satan, deceives the man even in his manifestation. In the Garden of Eden he is presented in the guise of a serpent. In the field of our history he takes all forms. Today he is presented as a man of science, art, technology. He is disguised as a psychologist, doctor, politician, army man, theologian and Christian. There is no form that he does not take.

His technique is infallible. He uses the truth to destroy the truth, mercy to erase mercy, justice to bring down justice, Scripture to deny the prophecy of Scripture, the Gospel to erase the traces of Jesus on our land. He makes use of theology to repudiate the sound doctrine of the Church. Of her men of government to give rise in the same Church to perverse roots of every falsehood and deceit upon Christ and his mystery of salvation. He uses the children of the Church to make the Church vain and harmless and the very grace of the sacraments to invalidate these channels of eternal life for every man. Great, beyond every thinking, his cunning!

How can we guard us from this craftiness, cunning, evil that every day he makes us breathe like air and drink like water? The way of salvation is the only one: the same suggested by Paul to the Galatians: *"If we ourselves, or an angel from heaven, should announce a gospel other than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed"* (Gal 1,8-9). Philosophers, scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, moralists, opinion writers and even the ministers of the Gospel will not be the ones to judge the world according to their words. Instead Satan uses them to confuse the minds of men and lead them into his kingdom of death.

The Word of Jesus Christ, his keynote speech, the only way to eternal life, has primacy over every other word of men. The whole world might say the opposite, the Christian must always answer: *"Your word contradicts that of my Lord. I believe in his. I cannot believe in yours."* Today, unfortunately, it is sufficient that the first person that comes around preaches a different word and we believe it, putting at risk our eternal life. It is a matter of intellectual honesty. You cannot follow Christ by listening to Satan. A choice is needed. Those who choose Christ, must choose the Word of Christ. If it gets out of the Word of Christ, it becomes a tool of Satan for the destruction of hearts.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, do not allow falsehoods and lies to enter into our hearts. Convince your children that only the Word of Jesus is unchangeable forever and it alone is the Word of life.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

**Seeing and worshipping the Lord**

*Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis on the Epiphany (01.06.2017)*

The epiphany (= from Greek, "manifestation") is the mystery of the unveiling by Christ of his saving identity to the world. On the occasion of this feast, during the homily, Pope Francis focused on the figure of the Magi, men of science, who moved from the East to Bethlehem to search and worship the King-Messiah. Taking up their words - 'Where is the one that was born the King of the Jews? We have seen his star, and have come to worship him" (Mt 2,2) - the Pope highlighted two verbs, *seeing* and *worshipping*, explaining how these two actions stand out in the Gospel passage. The Magi *saw* the luminous sign in the sky and desired to *worship* the King of the Jews.

The Pope noted, "the Magi did not set out because they had seen the star, but they saw the star because they had already set out” (cf. Saint John Chrysostom). Their hearts were open to the horizon and they could see what the heavens were showing them, for they were guided by an inner restlessness. They were open to something new." Since man is created in the image of God, for this reason he is also capable of relating to God, of entering into a dialogue with Him, *to receive his revelation.* That's why the Magi can see a sign in the star. Every man is naturally open to God, to his manifestation (which can also use a simple heavenly sign to lead hearts to His Word and to His Person). Also, being created by God, man is called to full communion with Him (cf. GS 19); for this man carries within him this constant desire for God, written in his heart (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 27). For this reason, he feels like a deep nostalgia for God in his life and, without knowing it, is moved to his search, if he does not soothe or stifle this aspiration because of sin.

But nostalgia is never reduced to a mere movement of the human heart. When the longing for God is authentic, it becomes true search for Him. This means acquiesce to the means that God, through Christ, has left to the Church and, in faith, make a change in their lives, through the assiduous efforts of thinking and living according to the Word of the Gospel. It also means breaking the chains of conformity, being freed from personal deterministic patterns that lead to believe that nothing might ever change. *"Believers “nostalgiosi"*- a neologism created and used by the Pope -, *who feel this longing are led by faith to seek God, as the Magi did, in the most distant corners of history, for they know that there the Lord awaits them."* The real *nostalgic of God* is the one who goes to the *peripheries*, of the world, those places that have not been imbued with the light of the Gospel to spread in them the good seed of the Word of Christ (cf. *Mk* 4.1 to 20).

Accordingly, a Christian who truly desires to meet the Lord in his life, cannot be closed in his comfort, in his interests, in his timidity, but must devote himself with enthusiasm to the mission, meeting the brothers and trying to rekindle in them the flame of faith, remembering that only the Word of Jesus changes the existence and human history. Think of how much good could be done if Christians exhorted others to participate in the Sunday Mass and the life of the ecclesial community. It is a duty that arises from the instances of the Gospel: "Whatever you did to children, you did it to me" (*Mt* 25:40); today many are those who are in need of God and the Church, despite the resistance that may be encountered.

The second aspect highlighted by the Pope is that the Magi came from the East with a clear intention: the adoration of the King of Israel. According to the story, they went to look for him in the place most suitable for a king: the Palace. It is proper of a king to be born in a palace, to have his court and his subjects and this is a sign of power, success and self-realization. The reasoning of these men conformed to patterns of the world. Therefore, the path that they had to undertake, was not only of a space-time order, but also a real evolution in the level of thought. In the Holy City, Jerusalem, they experienced something new, shocking: *"Finding out that what they were looking for was not in the palace but it was in another, not only geographical but existential place."*

To the Magi, Jerusalem represented the place to gain a clear understanding of who this King is; thanks mainly to the consultation of the Holy Scriptures, they understood that Jesus is, yes, a king, but different than the other kings of the earth. A humble King who wanted to be born in a *manger* in total silence from worldly noises, where no man could imagine. A King that does not let himself to be taken from the *idols* of the world (glory, success, power), that does not close himself in his selfishness, so forcing his subjects to live in poverty, oppression and suffering. On the contrary, he is a King rich in mercy and compassion, that forgives, heals and cures. Jesus is the God who, being born in a humble, simple, small and poor place, teaches men how to live in total freedom from the seductions of this world. He is the God who chose to fully share the fate of mankind, making himself like a child, a baby. Therefore, in his heart, there is room for the "little ones", for the poor and the needy.

The Epiphany is the manifestation of a person who becomes an anthropological model for every man. It is legitimate to ask, then: how must a Christian be? The Christian is called to follow in the footsteps of his Lord. His humility, meekness, becomes a source of exemplariness. The Christian cannot have any *"Idol"* either to worship or to put before the will of Christ Jesus. Humility must represent the distinctive sign for him, that allows every man to recognize him as a disciple of Jesus. The pulsating heart of his actions is the mercy for every needy brother. Therefore, mercy not as an abstract ideal, but as a work and concrete sharing: visiting the sick; consoling, forgiving the neighbours, announcing and reminding the Word of Jesus. But also knowing how to tell the other firmly: "This thing is not the Gospel." The correction, which is often regarded as a lack of mercy, is on the contrary the highest degree of charity, because it is a sign of attention to the other and the desire to make him enter into the truth.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help us to always be true *epiphany* of Christ, in order to manifest to every man the face of the Lord Jesus, the only one in whom God the Father manifests his loving face to all humanity.

*Father Felice Raffaele*

**ANYTHING MORE IS FROM THE EVIL ONE**

**(Sixth Sunday O.T. Year C)**

**NO MAN DOES HE COMMAND TO SIN (Sir 15.15 to 20)**

God does not walk with our thoughts, our interpretations of his Law, our decisions and not even with our conscience. He says a single word to the man: *"If you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will die." "If you exit the Word of my covenant, you get out of life and walk a path of death."* Every life is the blessing of God. Who is not blessed by the Lord might never find life. The Church was not given any power on the Commandments. Instead she has power in their teaching and above all in showing the life that is the result of their full compliance. No one has power over the Law. You are in the Law, you are in life, you are in the blessing. You are not in the Law, you are not in life. It is not the Church the one that gives the penalty, but the transgression itself. Not even conscience has power on the Commandments. The law of God does not depend on any created reality, not even from conscience. Evil is evil forever.

**CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY (1Cor 2.6 to 10)**

The mystery of Christ Crucified is understood with the help of a divine wisdom, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit. Some might say: *"Why did the Lord grant you this wisdom and he does not grant it to me?"* It is not the Lord the one who gives the Holy Spirit, but the Christian. It is the Christian who must bear his fruit and donate him as Spirit of conversion and adherence to Jesus Lord. The sacred ministers are the ones who then will have to give him as the spirit of regeneration and conformity to Christ in the sacraments. But if the Christian does not fructify the Spirit of conversion and full adherence to Jesus, the Spirit given in the sacraments does not produce fruit and the man remains in his ignorance and foolishness. Great is the responsibility of the Christian. He must be a true producer of the Holy Spirit, he- has to produce him in abundance so that the hearts are drawn to Christ and his Word. For him one opens to Christ or stays forever without the Saviour.

**YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO YOUR ANCESTORS (Mt 5.17 to 37)**

The Commandments say what needs to be given to the other because it is already his own. The Beatitudes proclaim us how we have to make of our life a sacrifice, a burnt offering, an offer for the greater good of our brothers. Christ gave himself for our eternal life. In Christ, the Christian gives himself for the life of every other man. That of the Christian is a life offered, sacrificed, given to God, through Christ in the Spirit to be transformed into the bread of life for the world. Having reduced the Christian life to the observance or non-observance of the sixth commandment, reveals us the deep drop in sound morality of the disciple of Jesus. It is as if we went back to more than three thousand years ago, to before the very Sinai alliance. It is as if Jesus did neither die, and nor resurrect for us. It is as if the Spirit of holiness had never been poured by him, by his body pierced on the cross. If all of the Commandments are today deleted by the Christians, what hope do we have to achieve full maturity in Christ Jesus? But can we be satisfied with such a low measure of morality, we that say we are worshippers of the Crucified?

**PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU**

**(VII Sunday O.T. Year C)**

**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF (Lev 19,1-2.17-18)**

So the Lord orders the man: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Neighbour is the one who is before us: saint, sinner, criminal, evil, bad, friend, enemy, stranger, foreigner, favourable and even hostile person, the one who does us good and even those who persecute us and want to hurt us. What should our behaviour be? Loving others as we love ourselves. All virtues which serve to love we must use them to love others. We love our neighbour, not starting from our feeling, but from the most perfect, full, complete and unreserved obedience to the precepts of the Lord. The Lord left nothing to our free initiative. Nothing must come from our will. Everything must be obedience to what the Lord has set for us. This rule was true yesterday, it is true for today, it will be true forever. Nothing from the heart of man, everything instead must come from God's heart. Love is obedience.

**THE TEMPLE OF GOD, WHICH YOU ARE, IS HOLY (1 Cor 3.16 to 23)**

A body of sin, vice disobedience, transgression of the Law, other than destroy the temple of God, becomes a very grave scandal to the world. If the Christian is corrupt, his corruption is limitless and becomes capable of any crime, abomination and vileness. It is with the sanctity of his body that the Christian must make Jesus credible. If the body is not in holiness, never Jesus will be believed and the wind takes his words away. No word of the Gospel takes root in a heart if the witness of the sanctity of the Christian body is lacking. The Body of Christ is holy, never might one make of it a body of sin. If the Christian does not sanctify his body, he makes of the body of Christ, a body of sin. Redemption, salvation and justification die. Never might a body of sin save one soul. It is this body of evil the true soteriological disaster that invests the world and condemns it to not salvation.

**BUT I SAY TO YOU, OFFER NO RESISTANCE TO ONE WHO IS EVIL (Mt 5.38 to 48)**

Jesus and the Christian are one body. The body of Jesus is pierced on the cross, without any resistance. The Christian body in the body of Christ is also pierced and placed on the cross. Can a Christian resist evil if he is a single body with the Crucified? Christian morality is a *"physical morality",* an *"ontological morality"* and a *"morality of his being."* Until baptism the morality is a gift of the will to the Lord. Later, it becomes gift of the body to Christ, to be with Him one body, so that Christ can bring to completion the work of salvation. So what is the morality of the Christian? In every moment, in every place and in every circumstance donating the body to Christ, so that Christ can fulfil the mission which is his from all eternity. The body is given to Jesus Christ, giving it entirely to his Word, to his Gospel. In the Word the body becomes in Christ the body of salvation and redemption, outside the Word it becomes a body of scandal that destroys the very redemption that Jesus works with other bodies. One sin of scandal of the Christian can move two-thirds of humanity away from the true faith in Jesus.

**Catanzaro - Visiting the sick**

The Apostolic Movement, in this new pastoral year 2016/17, has intensified in a structured way the work of "visiting the sick", which from the beginning has always been put into practice by the Inspirer and the members. In fact, a large group, consisting of about 50 people and cured by Father Francesco Cristofaro and the consecrated sister Anna Consoli, strives to visit organically several sick people at home, in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, residences for the elderly...

The structures in which they offer their work, in agreement with their respective governing bodies, are: R.S.A. Sacred Hearts and the Betania Foundation Centres (Catanzaro), every Wednesday; the nursing home Oasi of Padre Pio (Giovino pl., of Catanzaro), first and third Wednesday of the month; the House of Hope (Simeri Crichi), second and fourth Thursday of the month; the R.S.A. Madonna di Porto (Gimigliano), first and third Tuesday of the month; the Geraldine Sisters nursing home (Soverato Sup.), the second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

In the light of all of Sacred Scripture, the Church's faith speaks to us of the importance of this work of mercy. The Gospel often describes Jesus' encounter with people afflicted by all kinds of infirmity, those people who, along with the last and children, are the beloved of Christ. Who loves his neighbour and serves him, because he sees in him the very image of Jesus, he will in turn loved and considered blessed:... "I was sick and you visited me...".

The Inspirer and Founder of the Apostolic Movement, Mrs. Maria Marino, has always encouraged us and even today urges us, to do the works of true love, of charity. She herself, from the beginning of her mission, put into practice the Beatitudes of the Gospel, has served the brothers with works both of corporal and spiritual mercy. "The morning was dedicated to the family, the afternoon was devoted to Jesus and she started with the sick...". She gave support and comfort and consolation; she gave food to the hungry and helped the poor.

Encouraged by her example, it is also nice for us to spend some of our time to the sick, bringing them comfort, listening to them, praying with them through the Holy Rosary, singing together and giving a caress. It is service dear to the Lord, that gives us so much wealth. Their looks, their smiles are what enrich us and give each of us inner peace. Being told by a patient whom we visited, "This is one of the best days of my life, since I have been here...", fills the heart with joy. You receive double, triple, giving to others according to the charity of Christ. Through these experiences, we grasp the true meaning of life.

Let us ask the Lord Jesus for the grace to make us always persevere in this work of mercy. Let us trust in the presence of the Mother of the Redemption, the Angels and Saints, so that they accompany our steps and help us to always recognize the face of Her Son in every sick person that we encounter on our journey.

***Concetta Silipo***

**THE LORD THE GLORY...**

Do not feel you reached the goal,

do not think you are the first.

Every day you have to start over.

The road is long, the desert arid, Satan lurking,

Judas always ready to betray you.

Be not disheartened;

prayer will help you to get up,

if the Holy Spirit dwells in you.

Live in his grace,

operate in the name of the Lord.

Do not create divisions,

do not shut yourself in your human security,

do not seek the exaltation of your person.

To the Lord the glory, power, honour, blessing.

To Him the thanking

of all he does,

even if he serves himself of you.

If you want to work in his vineyard,

consider yourself a useless servant.

If you want the Lord to sow,

through you,

the grain of eternal life and the kingdom,

walk humbly together with him,

let yourself be corrected,

modelled and shaped by him

like clay in the potter's hand.

If you want to carry out his work,

live His Word,

bearing the weight of your conversion

in perseverance and fidelity.

It is then that you can indicate to the brothers

how to live his law,

how to practice his beatitudes.

If you want to fulfil your mission,

be trained in his will,

carry it out first and then teach it.

Be always a model and example of virtue,

and the Lord,

for your righteousness and your holiness,

will make you an instrument of reconciliation,

a means of salvation for the world.

Humble yourself before the Lord

and acknowledge him alone

operator of salvation.

His is every redemption.

***Maria Marino***