**Year XXXIV n. 9 April 23, 2017**

**Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return**

The Lord, the God who created his people, freeing it from harsh slavery in Egypt, goes back in history to recreate it once again, redeeming it from the harsh Babylonian exile. While in the first creation he had used Moses, with whom he had worked wonders and signs, this new creation is operated directly by him, without any mediation. He will come, will prepare the way, will make it straight, will make it viable and his redeemed will return on it. The real hope is always a new creation of our God.

If our God does not descend and does not create the new man, no real hope will be fulfilled: "*A highway will be there, called the holy way; No one unclean may pass over it, nor fools go astray on it. Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return and enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; They will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee*" (Isaiah 35.1 to 10). The true God knows how to create life with ever new ways.

The first creation failed because of sin. The Lord wants to operate a new one acting differently. In the first creation he took the dust of the ground, kneaded it, made a man of it and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. It is a creation for a dual exit: exit from the earth and exit from God. Man is man because God has taken him from the dust of the ground and from himself. From the dust he took the matter, from himself he took the breath of life, giving it to him as created breath. Now the Lord proceeds in the reverse way.

The new creation is no longer by *"extraction from"*, but by *"immersion in."* The way proclaimed by the prophet is prepared directly by God in a surprisingly divine way. He creates a very pure and immaculate flesh. In this flesh his Eternal Only Son becomes a man. The new man is not taken from the dust of the ground, but from the most pure flesh of the Mother and from Heaven. In the Virgin his eternal breath, which is his Son, is made real flesh. This way, both divine and human, is not run through by walking on it, but in it, becoming one with it. You walk towards the heavenly Jerusalem, becoming one body with Christ, drawing nourishment from his own life, quenching your thirst with his blood and feeding your thoughts with his truth. Consuming Christ and getting consumed in Him, you can run through the way and you might attain eternal freedom. No other way is given by the Lord for him to be reached. But not even another way is given so that man can be redeemed, so that he can live as a free person, no longer enslaved to the bondage of Satan, that wants him a prisoner of sin and vices.

Then, as Satan ruined, not without the responsibility of man, the first creation, so now he wants to shatter the second. He wants to obscure this way, proposing to men infinite other ways, which however are not the way prepared by God. Today, the wily serpent knows that he can no longer act as in the origins. In the first temptation, by bringing the first man into death, he brought them all into death. We all inherit the consequences of that first sin. Today, being Christ the new man, his strategy is that of detaching every single person from Christ. How to succeed in his intent?

The individual way is almost neglected by him. Here is his very new strategy: destroying the very way: Christ. Cancelling Him, for man there are no more chances of returning to his freedom either on earth or in the eternal ages. How did he in the centuries succeed in this intent? By separating Christians from his ecclesial body. Christ and his Church are not two paths, but only one. One becomes the body of Christ and he becomes Church. He is on the perfect path. One leaves the Church, the path is no longer that of God. It is a human path that does not produce fruit.

Yesterday, he took away Christians from the body of the Church. Now, wanting to remove Christ from his Body which is the Church, he is convincing many Christians that Christ is not needed to the Church. If Christ is not needed to the Church he is not even needed to humanity. His first great achievement: all religions are ways of salvation. The other is even more lethal: you can be anonymous Christians without Christ and without the Church. The new creation by *"immersion in"* ends. Since only this is the way of God, the man is condemned to an eternal slavery. There still exists a third cunning of Satan. He is persuading the disciples of Jesus that there is no use in forming the Church. Without the body of the Church, there is no true way of salvation. The Church is not formed, the way is not prepared, the redeemed cannot walk on it. One is not immersed in the Church, he does not run through paths of salvation.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, you are the Mother of the Church and also her perfect image. You gave the body and flesh to Christ and Christ has become the way of salvation and redemption. Do not allow the Church to fall into temptation and stop giving her body to Christ. She would condemn humanity to eternal damnation. Christ and the Church are one body, one way, one life and one journey to go through to eternal freedom.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

***The Church is inextricably linked to the destiny of the peoples***

*Reflections from the Speech of H.H. Francis to the heads of state of the European Union (03/24/2017)*

Friday, March 24, the Holy Father met with the Heads of State and Government of the EU, on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

Two points of his speech deserve great attention. A first step involves the destinies of States and Europe and that of the Holy See, a special institution that recalls the remaining of the Church among men as *"the tent of God, of the incarnate Word, dwelling of the Holy Spirit" among men* (cf. Jn 1:14). In a certain way and according to a certain analogy, the Church anticipates the opportunity to experience the closeness of God, of the triune God with men, that the Apocalypse sees eternalized in the heavenly Jerusalem: *"Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race"* (Rev 21,3).

By virtue of this profound mystery which binds the Church as the Body of Christ to all men in the horizon of the logic of the incarnation, she lives her mission among men, for men, in obedience to her Mandatary, Christ Jesus, her Redeemer, that entrusted her this mission (cf. Mt 28.18 to 20).

In light of these premises these words of the Pope are better understood: "To each I wish to signify the affection that the Holy See has for your respective countries and for the whole of Europe, to whose destinies it is, by order of Providence, inextricably linked" (Speech).

The arrangement of Divine Providence inseparably linked the Church to the destiny of peoples and nations and the love which she has for the peoples and nations is a theological or teandric affection, not merely human. That of Christ is a universal saving mission and also a universal enlightenment mission. The old Simeon revealed it to Virgin Mary, addressing her, under divine inspiration, these words: "*Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel*" (Lk 2: 29-32). There echo many ancient passages from the prophet Isaiah, that see in Christ the mysterious fulfilment of those promises.

The Church is among the States not as a "State" but as the presence of light, life yeast, prophetic and transcendence voice, that reveals and that indicates in Christ the mystery of history, the mystery of existence and the mystery of the Highest human dignity.

For this reason the Church cannot be indifferent to the destiny of peoples and nations. Instead she is greatly responsible of them being able to guide them to the good and to salvation, as her Redeemer did for those who, having been met by him, in the Holy Spirit, let themselves be led to the heart of the Father; but also to evil and to perdition, if she fails in her mission of being the sentinel of salvation (cf. Ez 33.1 to 20).

Her task is to remind men - and this is the second step of the Holy Father that deserves attention - that the goal they have to pursue is not purely and solely earthly, "Without a real ideal perspective you end up being dominated by fear that the other tears us from established habits, deprives us of acquired comforts, somehow questions a way of life that too often is made only of material well-being. On the contrary, the wealth of Europe has always been her spiritual openness and the ability to ask herself basic questions about the meaning of existence. [...] The acquired well-being seems to have clipped her wings and made her lower her sight. Europe has a great spiritual and ideal heritage unique in the world that deserves to be revived with passion and renewed freshness and that is the best remedy against the lack of values ​​of our time, a breeding ground for all forms of extremisms" (Speech).

And a little after the Holy Father added, referring to Pope Paul VI: "Europe finds hope when investing in development and peace. Development is not given by a set of production techniques. It concerns the whole human being: the dignity of his work, adequate living conditions, access to education and medical care. "Development is the new name for peace," affirmed Paul VI. (Pope Paul VI, Lett.enc. Populorum Progressio, 26 March 1967 87)" (Speech).

It is in this full-bodied social teaching document, written by Paul VI, that significant expressions about the mission of the Church among peoples and nations, which deserve to be remembered, are found. "*The Church, which has long experience in human affairs and has no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation, "seeks but one goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth; to save, not to judge; to serve, not to be served.'' Founded to build the kingdom of heaven on earth rather than to acquire temporal power, the Church openly avows that the two powers—Church and State—are distinct from one another; that each is supreme in its own sphere of competency. But since the Church does dwell among men, she has the duty "of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel." Sharing the noblest aspirations of men and suffering when she sees these aspirations not satisfied, she wishes to help them attain their full realization. So she offers man her distinctive contribution: a global perspective on man and human realities*" (Paul VI , Lett.enc. Populorum Progressio, 26 March 1967, 13).

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, you are the Queen of peoples and the Anchor of Salvation of continents. Under the cross of your Son you were constituted Mother of all the living and you serve yourself of the Church to achieve your mission of salvation and your *"royal ministry."* until the end of time You want the Father's creatures to be saved and that is why you do not stop to watch, search, call, take and give birth in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, to living stones that build the kingdom of the Heavenly Father on earth and in heaven. Send your angels to our aid, we want to respond to this plan of salvation and give a new soul to the world. You will send them and with their help and with the intercession of the saints we will cooperate to help the world understand, showing and announcing the Word of your Son Jesus, that the "fountain of life" lives in you and that "in your light we see the light" (Ps 36 [35], 10).

***Father Giuseppe Deodato***

**AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME, SO I SEND YOU**

**(Second Sunday of Easter Year A)**

**THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE TEACHING (Acts 2.42 to 47)**

The Church lives from growth in Christ and in herself. She grows in Christ, by being nourished with the Word of Christ and his grace. She must always draw these two nourishments from the Apostles. Teaching and grace must be given without interruption, assiduously. Every faithful must also assiduously receive them. If she detaches herself from these two gifts, the Church does not grow in Christ. She has no strength to build herself. Two other things are needed. The prayer to ask God for every grace. Everything is a gift of the Lord. Everything must be asked him with an assiduous prayer. The fellowship, which is communion with the truth and grace of Jesus is lived and realized in the sharing of both personal spiritual and material goods. Sharing attests to the truth of our faith in Christ and our growth as his true Church. The Christian gives himself wholly to Christ and in Christ gives himself wholly to the brothers. Communion is perfect.

**TO A LIVING HOPE (1 Pt 1,3-9)**

After sin, the Lord creates for men a new hope: Christ Jesus. He creates it not as an external, but as an internal hope and it is accomplished by forming Jesus Christ in us and us in Christ Jesus. It is only in Him that man becomes a real man, though not in one moment, but committing himself entirely to the realization of this remarkable transformation in Him. Looking for other hopes out of Christ the Lord is vanity and foolishness. Our God has constituted no one else for us as true hope and if He does not constitute, no one can be constituted on his own. Realizing his hope in Christ, becoming him true man and manifesting to every other man the fulfilment of hope in him and him in hope, the Christian might help every one of his brothers so that he also finds in Christ his true hope and reaches the fulfilment of his humanity. Only in Christ, the real man, you can become real men. No other way is bestowed upon us.

**WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD. (Jn 20, 19-31)**

Moses, so that the Pharaoh and his people believed in God, carried out ten signs. Jesus so that his disciples believed in his every word, did many miracles and wonders. History shows us that every man that gave splendour to the faith, has always been helped by a vision of the Lord. What would have happened to Saul if Jesus had not blinded him with his light on the road to Damascus? What would there be of the pagan world if Peter had not been visited by the Lord? Man is not only intelligence, he is eye, ear, touch, taste and smell. Can we exclude the five senses from the process of faith? The man is intelligence and history, he is spirit and matter. Matter cannot be excluded from the process of faith. It is up to those who are the missionaries of faith to always compose in them intelligence and history, spirit and matter. If faith is not born, it is not necessarily the other’s responsibility. It is often our responsibility. We did not show faith in its completeness of intelligence, history, spirit, matter, words, signs, truth and work. The obligation is all ours.

**WHO DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE THERE IN THESE DAYS?**

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

**GOD RAISED HIM UP (At 2,14a.22-33)**

The Crucifixion of Jesus must always be told. The resurrection musst always be announced. In the beginning the ministry was of the Apostles. Jesus was manifested to them. By sacrament the ministry of the announcement belongs to every man who lets himself be soaked in the waters of baptism. The baptized is dead and risen in Christ. Living in crucified and risen Christ, he must always manifest crucified and risen Christ with his life. Without this dual manifestation, the baptized might never manifest the resurrected Christ in his body. Historically Christ died, he has risen historically and ascended to heaven historically. His is not only a transcendent truth. It is both a truth of transcendence and immanence. So it must take place in the Christian: the transcendent truth of Christ, in which he is immersed, must become in him a historical truth, through the transformation of his body and of his whole life.

**CONDUCT YOURSELVES WITH REVERENCE (1 Peter 1.17 to 21)**

The fear of God is the first fundamental and essential truth of our faith. We believe with deep conviction that God is faithful to his every Word. He works according to what he said and how he said it. Since the Word of the Lord says death and life and conditions to stay alive and the paths that lead to death, whoever believes in God's faithfulness to His Word is saved. Who does not believe in the faithfulness of God, is damned and incurs eternal death. If one loses the fear of God, he walks in illusion. He is convinced that the Lord is not true to his Word and runs through ways of death, he thinks that in the end we will all be in his holy heavens. Today, this is the leprosy that is shredding our faith. No longer it believes that God is faithful to his every Word. One wants to live by faith without the Word. He believes in God, but not in the Word of God. By behaving this way they run through not the path of life, but that of death.

**ARE YOU THE ONLY VISITOR TO JERUSALEM (Lk 24,13-35)**

Jesus is the only foreigner because he is the only one who sees himself with the eyes of the purest faith. He saw himself with the eyes of the purest truth in every moment of his life. While everyone else saw him with the eyes of the flesh, he saw himself with the eyes of the Holy Spirit. Seeing himself with the eyes of the Spirit of the Lord, he knew his mystery, he knew that death was the only way to attain the resurrection and with the resurrection to rise up to the Father and receive from him the promised kingdom. Who sees with the eyes of the purest faith is always a stranger in Jerusalem, in the city of men. This truth applies also to every disciple of Jesus. It suffices that he looks at himself with the eyes of the true faith, that the Word of the true faith is fulfilled in him and he instantly becomes a stranger. Just because Jesus is a stranger in Jerusalem, a stranger to his brothers and his mother's children, He is the true Messiah. All the Word of the Lord is fulfilled in him. But Jesus will always be a stranger to this world. He will be the foreigner who must be repatriated to his heaven.

**May 9, 2017: Ninth Convention of the Apostolic Movement**

With its own annual meetings, which bring together members and guests from Italy and Abroad, the Apostolic Movement intends to propose a reflection of topical interest in the Church and society, by listening to the Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops.

This year's theme projects us onto the theme of the next Synod of Bishops’ General Assembly (October 2018), that Pope Francis wanted to dedicate to *"Youth, faith and vocational discernment"*.

Upon invitation of the Catanzaro-Squillace Archbishop, **H.E. Mons. Vincenzo Bertolone**, the Convention will enjoy the authoritative contributions of **H. Eminence Lorenzo Baldisseri**, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops and of the Catanzaro Attorney General, **doc. Nicola Gratteri**.

PROGRAM

**The Church listens and accompanies young people in the change of era**

**"A better world is also built thanks to you" (Pope Francis)**

Catanzaro - Politeama

Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 5:30 p.m.

Father Francesco Brancaccio, dioc. eccl. assist. of the Apostolic Movement

Moderator

Cesare Rotundo, President of the Apostolic Movement

*Greetings*

Antonio Afeltra

*We young people and our expectations*

H.E. Card. Lorenzo BALDISSERI, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops

*Youth, faith and vocational discernment*

Doc. Nicola GRATTERI, Attorney General of the Republic, Catanzaro

*Young people and society: interpreting hardships and motivating hopes*

H.E. Mons. Vincenzo BERTOLONE, the Catanzaro-Squillace Metrop. Archbishop

*Conclusions*

**MOTHER... MOTHER OF REDEMPTION...**

At the foot of the cross, you prayed,

forgiving those who have pierced

your Son Jesus.

You looked at him...

Your Divine Son...

You suffered...

An anguish overtook you...

You kept everything in your heart...

No tears came down,

but a sob made you tremble.

Mother,

poor, but rich in faith...

in that yes...

faith prevailed and your great love triumphed

for God the Father.

I think of you transfixed,

I meditate your pain,

your sacrifice

and that sword...

Your faith did not waver

at the foot of Christ crucified.

In this great tribulation you became stronger,

O Mother,

and crushed the head to the ancient serpent,

to the enemy of man.

The Lord fulfilled through you

the promise made in the earthly paradise.

There, under the cross,

you became the Mother of the Redemption,

when your Divine Son made you Mother of us all,

forever.

Man,

imitate the Mother of Jesus:

live all the way as she did

all of the faith

in the Word of our Heavenly Father.

You will be a true son

of her who conceived you

in sorrow

and in the unspeakable suffering of the spirit.

Man,

like Mary,

offer all of yourself

to the Lord your God for your salvation.

***Maria Marino***