**Year XXXIV n. 10 May 07, 2017**

**Lift up your eyes on high and see**

The people of God are in exile, under a heavy slavery. There is no redemption from man. It can only come from the Lord. But how to convince the people that He can work any liberation in any corner, even the most remote of the earth? Inviting them to raise their eyes and look at the boundless universe of the stars. Who created them? Who knows them all by name? Who rules them as if they were like sand grains in his hands? Only He, their Lord and their Creator. So almighty a God, so great as to form the universe, is also capable of liberating his people from a man whose breath is on loan.

*"He sits enthroned above the vault of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; He stretches out the heavens like a veil, spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. He brings princes to nought and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted or sown, scarcely is their stem rooted in the earth, When he breathes upon them and they wither, and the storm wind carries them away like straw. To whom can you liken me as an equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these: He leads out their army and numbers them, calling them all by name. By his great might and the strength of his power not one of them is missing!" (cf. Is 40: 1-31).*

St. Paul invites Christians not to build on the creating Almightiness of God. It does not apply to an army of condemned to death. We need another vision. the Lord's action changes, our faith must necessarily change. It is necessary to pass to the contemplation of Jesus Crucified, in whom all the infinite love of God for the man to redeem is enclosed. The Father showed his omnipotence of grace on the cross, preserving his Son in the purest love. He revealed his omnipotence of glory in the sepulchre by raising him, clothing him with a spiritual, glorious, incorruptible, immortal body of light, sitting on his right hand in the highest of heavens.

*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ (Jesus) who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Cf. Rm 8,1-39).*

Before such a soaring sight, the Christian must convince himself that in martyrdom he too, assisted by grace, will be victorious in the purest love, never falling into the temptation that wishes he were with his heart full of rancour, revenge and thirst for justice, causing him to curse and to blaspheme his bitter lot. Goodness, piety, mercy and forgiveness in martyrdom are the very manifestation of the almightiness of the grace of the Lord. From the contemplation of Jesus Crucified, the certainty starts that the Lord in suffering prepares our body to be transformed into the image of the body of his Son.

If the Crucifix is ​​taken away from the Christian view or the Christian does not contemplate it any more - and today this is the attack launched by Satan onto the Western world, whose existence has always been built on the Crucifix - for man there is no more conviction of faith. Without the Crucifix, hatred for suffering is born and one must be freed from it. The ways of liberation from it are known: abortion, divorce, euthanasia, violence, delinquency, thefts, speculations, murders, wars, massacres, infinite false rights, abominations and atrocities that the heart without Christ Crucified invents but with results of eternal perdition. It is foolish to get rid of suffering by creating suffering. Jesus has nailed in an indissoluble manner to suffering and has won it with the almightiness of grace of the Father.

Only Christ Crucified is the salvation of man. Those who want the Crucifix to be taken away from the eyes of men, want a desperate and destroyed man, consumed by pain. The more you take the Crucifix away and the more you have to replace it. It is replaced with the gas chambers, with death rooms, with courts that with arbitrary sentences make violence to nature by imposing it laws that it might never respect. Continuing to take the Crucifix away from the sight of men and their contemplation, man will take his place and will create a humanity where the most powerful will always crucify the weaker and weaker, since he too is without the Crucified, will do his best to be unnailed of his cross with the evil will of crucifying the mighty person.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, gives a little judgement and wisdom to the disciples of Jesus. Ensure that they understand that only the Crucifix was given by the Father as Saviour and Redeemer of the world. depriving the world of the Crucified contemplation is condemning it to eternal despair.

***Father Constantino Di Bruno***

**In communion with the Spirit of God**

Reflections from the Speech of H.H. Francis for the World Youth Day (8.4.2017)

Pope Francis exhorts the young people to feel themselves protagonists of Church life, an active part of the mission of salvation that invests all the people of God, according to the prophecy of Joel, taken from the Acts of the Apostles: "‘It will come to pass in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

All the people of God is a prophetic people, where everyone is called, from the greater to the smaller, from the child to the old man, to live in communion with the Spirit of the Lord. In fact, it is the Spirit that works ever new wonders in the midst of the people, in those who every day let themselves be created, transformed and led by Him.

In the society of men - the Pope notes - "young people are often discarded" (Speech), on the margins, neglected. Not so in the people of God. The Lord loves, seeks, calls, sends young people with a pure heart, to work with them the prodigies of his love. In Scripture, it is stupendous the example of Daniele, the young man on whom the Spirit of the Lord was revealed, to release the innocent Susanna from the false accusations of ungodly and evil men who were about to condemn her to death unjustly: "While Susanna was lead to death, the Lord aroused the holy spirit of a young man called Daniel, who cried out, "I am innocent of her blood!" Everyone turned to him saying, "What do you mean by your words?" Then Daniel, standing in their midst, said, "Are you so foolish, Israelites? You have condemned to death a daughter of Israel without investigating the truth! Go back to the court, for they have laid the fake against her." The people went back immediately and the elders said to Daniel, "Come and sit in our midst and be as a master to us, for God has given you the gift of old age" (Dn 13, 45-50).

But be very careful. It is true that the Spirit can work with whoever wants and use all. But even foolishness, dullness, adaptation to the world's thinking do not know age: "From their youth their ways go to evil and they cannot change their stone hearts into fleshly hearts" (Sir 17 , 16). So before being young or old, what matters is being in communion with the Spirit of the Lord in the Church that is His holy and living temple.

The real question is then: how might a young man enter and remain in communion with the Spirit of God, which is the source of all holiness, the light of every intellect and the author of all good? The author of Psalm 119 also asks himself that, "How might a young man keep his way pure?" The answer is one, simple and immediate: "Observing your Word" (Ps 119: 9). No other ways are given: the secret of life at all ages is obedience to the Law of the Lord.

In obedience to the Law of God, life buds and fruits: the fruits of the Lord's blessing are gathered abundant. Even the proof, suffering and pain, lived in the love of God, are welcomed as an occasion for purification and sanctification.

In mortal sin, communion with the Spirit giver of life is destroyed. Man precipitates instantly into the abyss of stupidity. The intellect becomes incapable of discerning what the true good for himself and for others is: here is he that one becomes ruthless, rebellious and crucified. The will becomes like a dry leaf in the heat of the wind: here is that the passions and vices begin to lead it through winding paths, through death paths. One precipitates into a very dangerous situation. A young man who refuses to listen to the Word of God becomes like a ship that moves forward, but without a rudder, risking at any moment to go crushing against some rocks.

Young people cannot guide themselves alone. Who has to help them, directing them on the path of life, adults, starting with their parents are the ones to do it. Our Inspirer has given us a sublime example. Moved by great love, she always worried about making the young the most holy, useful, necessary gift for their life: the precious pearl that is Jesus, his Word that makes one free, purifies, fills the heart of untold joy. The life of man of all ages is in the Word of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14: 6).

The Holy Father emphasizes the importance of dialogue between young people and the elderly. It is in this dialogue that the bridges between the past and the future are laid. It is in this dialogue that the faith of the fathers is transmitted to children.

In view of the two day meeting that the Church awaits - the Synod of Bishops, on the theme *Youth, Faith and Vocation Discernment* and the World Youth Day scheduled for Panama in 2019 - the Pope gives the youth an "official mandate": This is the task I give you in the Name of the Church: *Speaking to the Elders*» (Speech).

In the tradition of the Church, the *elders* are primarily the priests ("presbyter" comes from the Greek and means right the *elder*), that is, the priests: they are constituted by God, to guide the steps of the people on the way of life, drawn by the Lord. A young man who does not dialogue with a holy priest, with a spiritual father, will easily fall victim to temptation, getting lost along the way.

The Holy Father emphasizes the role of grandparents: "Today we need more than ever, we need this bridge, the dialogue between grandparents and young people, between the old and the young." (Speech). Here is how the Book of Sirach, written for the inexperienced who wish to be instructed in the Law of the Lord, exhorts the young men: "My son, if you wish, you can be taught; if you apply yourself, you will be shrewd. If you are willing to listen, you will learn; if you give heed, you will be wise. Frequent the company of the elders; whoever is wise, stay close to him. Be eager to hear every godly discourse; let no wise saying escape you. If you see a man of prudence, seek him out; let your feet wear away his doorstep! Reflect on the precepts of the Lord, let his commandments be your constant meditation; Then he will enlighten your mind, and the wisdom you desire he will grant" (Sir 6: 32-37).

The most necessary thing for a young man is to nourish the desire to be educated, to cultivate Wisdom, love and taste for the things of God. It is in this humility that one grows, on the example of Jesus who, being submissive to Joseph and Mary, "grew in wisdom, age and grace, before God and men" (Lk 2:52).

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, the seat of Wisdom, give us an ever greater love for the things of Heaven.

***Father Davide Riggio***

**I AM THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP**

**(IV Easter Sunday Year A)**

**WHAT ARE WE TO DO, MY BROTHERS? (Acts 2,14a.36-41)**

Announcement of Jesus and explicit invitation to believe in Him are inseparable. Those who are touched by the Holy Spirit, listen to the Word of Peter on Crucified and Risen Christ and ask, *"What should we do, brothers?"* Peter's response is immediate: *"Get converted and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Spirit."* Preaching, explicit invitation to faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, conversion, sacraments must be one thing. The reception of Christ truth and grace is the end of the Church's preaching and mission. As it is the primary purpose to build the body of Christ with the addition of new baptized. The Church is the necessary way for salvation. Preaching a true salvation outside the body of Christ is against the truth of the Church, sent into the world to make disciples of Jesus of all peoples, making them Christ's body.

**TO THE SHEPHERD AND GUARDIAN OF YOUR SOULS (1Pt 2,20b-25)**

The Christian has only one mission to do: looking at Christ and shaping his own life according to his style. Christ is the Suffering Servant, the Crucified, the One who has taken upon himself all the sins and the punishments of men to expiate them in his body. Even the disciple must become a suffering servant in Christ. He must be able to withstand all injustice, iniquity, offense and deprivation of every right. He must never know evil. He must only think about loving, letting himself be crucified by all the injustices of the world. The Christian must be formed at the school of his cross, because it is on the cross that Jesus revealed all the power of his love when he asked the Father to forgive his crucifiers. A sheep that follows the Shepherd that expiates the world's sin must also want to expiate sins. That is why he must *"get used to"* every insult, spit, slander, injustice, arrogance and offence for the name of Jesus the Lord.

**THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY (Jn 10,1-10)**

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the life of the sheep. He gives his life by atoning for their sin and sending the Holy Spirit to give to those who believe in him, in the waters of Baptism, supernatural and eternal life, making him son of the Father, elevating him to the highest dignity of his true body. He also gives life really, substantially, truly, by offering his flesh to be eaten and its blood to be drunk. In this he is the true Easter Lamb. However, he is not the Lamb that is eaten only at Easter during the celebration of the Supper, but he is consumed every day, even several times a day, to carry out the journey to eternal glory in the skies of God the Father. There is nothing missing in the life of Christ the Lord. It is humanly and divinely full and perfect. If a disciple of Jesus does not reach the eternal kingdom or does not pass from sin to grace for all the days of his life, responsibility is his only. God, by giving us Christ, Christ, by giving us the Holy Spirit and eternal life, the Spirit, by giving us himself, Christ Jesus and the Father, have nothing more to give. They have given everything.

**MASTER, SHOW US THE FATHER, AND THAT WILL BE ENOUGH FOR US**

**(V Easter Sunday Year A)**

**TO PRAYER AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD (Acts 6: 1-7)**

In the body of Christ, everyone can ask the other to be what the other might never be, either by vocation, or by charisma, or by ministry, or by immediate command of the Spirit of God, but when asked what is contrary to what has been ordained from above, we must immediately abandon all obedience. Peter and the Apostles were sent by Christ the Lord, in the Holy Spirit, to preach the Word, sowing it in every heart. This is their mission. They must also pray for the Spirit to fertilize their proclamation, turning it into conversion and fullness of faith. They cannot take care of tables. Peter also teaches us that it is always possible to create new mandates, which are required by the multiple needs of the community. Thus every celestial command is respected and also the body of Christ is served in truth and grace. It is of the Spirit of the Lord to suggest new ministries for new needs.

**A STONE THAT WILL MAKE PEOPLE STUMBLE AND FALL (1Pt 2,4-9)**

Whoever receive Christ is edified as the temple of God in Him. For who does not let himself be conquered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus, the Crucified, becomes a stumbling stone and a stone of scandal. Only who is not in the Spirit of God can say that the Lord will eventually envelop all of us with his mercy and we will all be stones in his home. Because deprived of all divine wisdom, we do not understand that the Father's mercy is precisely the gift of Christ Crucified, in whom and from whom our eternal redemption is. We do not accept Christ Crucified, we die in our sins. Rather Christ Jesus will become a stumbling stone and stone of scandal for eternity. The gates of hell open wide. We are false witnesses of Christ and of God, because we are against the Holy Spirit, we devastate the truth of God which is Jesus Christ and destroy Christ Crucified that is the mercy and grace of the Father for our eternal redemption.

**WHOEVER HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER (Jn 14: 1-12)**

We can assert that Jesus is on our earth the heart, life, holiness of the Father manifested to us in all their splendour of grace, truth, light, mercy, compassion, wisdom, knowledge, intelligence and love. In his flesh Jesus Christ reveals all the omnipotence of the goodness of the Father. In Christ is the whole Father who works the same way that the Father has worked with Adam when he created him. That is why Jesus can say, *"He who has seen me has seen the Father."* If the Father himself were to act, he could not do different or bigger, more holy or more striking and extraordinary things. Indeed, in Christ Crucified, the Father has done something that He might never even do: *"Dying for the love of his creatures."* The Father might always show his omnipotence of grace, truth, justice, holiness, mercy and charity, but he might never die for man. Death for love is only of the Son. But the Father is as if he died in the Son, for the Son is all his life. Between the love of the Father and the love of Christ and every other virtue of Christ and virtue of the Father there is no difference.

**Announcing the joy of love in the family**

Reflection requested to the Apostolic Movement for the Day of the Catanzaro-Squillace Lay Aggregations 2017

"The Trinity God is a communion of love and the family is its living reflection." Pope Francis confidently reminds us of this certainty (cf. AL 11), from which the inner Christian vision of the family arises: the family is a communion that overcomes all human, natural, historical and cultural reasons. In his plan of mercy, God wanted the human family to have its source of unity, its power of love, its vocation to charity right from the Holy Trinity, which is eternal and indissoluble communion of love. And this communion of love is the true source of joy. There can be no earthly good and no human satisfaction that can fill and satisfy the vocation of the family, if not the love of unity and fidelity that is lived within it and opens to the world. The joy of the family comes from the love lived in the image of the Trinitarian love.

Is it perhaps a too high and unreachable project? Is perhaps the Trinitarian love a model that does not take into account the human fragility and the weights imposed by sin and history?

Let us first remember that the Trinitarian love is an incarnate love. By becoming a man, the Son loved the Father, with the power of the Spirit, as a true man, in the true flesh, in the most real labour and in the most cruel suffering of the cross. From the cross, the Trinitarian love manifests itself and spreads as the love offered to the Father by a human Heart, a love stronger than any sin and pain, rather a love capable of transforming the wounds produced by sin into gift and sacrifice of salvation for the whole of humanity.

With the force of the Spirit poured out of the pierced Heart of Christ, the human family also finds the true source of concrete, earthly and daily love. Of course, the love that is lived in the family might never ignore the fatigue of the flesh and the concreteness of history. But right in this human concreteness, it is manifested that love is gift of the self, it is also sacrifice and it is also labour. To love, we must not expect to have a dream family, without problems, without misunderstandings, infirmities, regrets and frailty. But among these human weaknesses, each of us can give himself, according to the will of the Lord: "In joy and sorrow, in health and in illness, loving and to honouring you for all the days of my life..."

Pope Francis encourages us again: "Matrimonial joy, which can also be lived in pain, implies accepting that marriage is a necessary combination of joys and labour, tensions and rest, suffering and liberation, satisfaction and of search, of trouble and pleasure, always on the path of friendship, which urges the wedded couple to take care of one another: "providing a mutual help and service" (AL 126).

We are certain of this: in the couple, in the family, love is not only the well-being and the pleasure of feeling attracted with satisfaction, it is not only the full harmony of body, feelings and thoughts. Love is also to understand, to support, to endure one another patiently, to bear the limits of each other, with effort, suffering and charity. Yes, love is also a cross, because it is essentially a gift: the gift of you to the other, a faithful and indissoluble gift, with the grace of God.

But it is this concrete love that makes concrete joy possible: not the virtual joy dreamed of in an ideal family. The joy of being given, the joy of knowing one thing alone with the bride or groom, the joy of being a life for the children, the joy of knowing oneself a neighbour even in the greatest efforts.

Human joy does not exist without sacrifices, as long as we are on earth... But in Christ, joy is our vocation, on earth and in heaven! Mother of God, Queen of the Family, help us regain the joy of love!

**THAT DAY...**

Yours is a command of love,

so that the creatures of the Father

pass from darkness to light.

Go on...

And you walk and go on...

The man of goodwill

lands his ear to the Word of the Lord.

But how much suffering in the spirit...

You feel the rejection

of the man that loves the god money,

of the man that does not want to be converted

and does not want to observe the commandments,

because he chose to serve his law,

that he does and undoes to his liking,

according to his will.

Anxiety overtakes you.

The temptation...

Do not continue...

Prayer...

And you go on...

and you bring the voice of him

that makes you cry in the wilderness:

"Repent and believe in the Gospel."

The Most Holy Virgin sustains you;

she does not want you to stop.

The Gehenna is full...

In his infinite goodness and mercy

the Lord wants to make the sheep go back to the fold.

Along with prayer

you offer your suffering of body and spirit,

so that the lost sheep return to God.

You know it:

your Lord wants all of you,

every moment,

every sigh.

For the salvation of the world

He asks you for your life

and you offer it, for love, in atonement.

You are sure:

the Lord will forgive and change many hearts

that are waiting, that want, that hope.

Nothing belongs to you anymore:

you die and live for him, for your Lord.

Help me, my God, I want to continue...

***Maria Marino***