**Year XXXIV n. 11 May 21, 2017**

**I, the Lord, am the first**

Every man can be powerful, never omnipotent. He might also live long on earth, but he is not eternal. At any moment he could be already in eternity, out of history. Only God is almighty and eternal. Everything passes and ages before Him, everything wears out and disappears. He remains for eternity because from eternity are his days without days: *"I the Lord, I am the first, and with the last I will also be"* (cf. Is 41: 1-29). Man dies. He lives.

*"I am the first."* Before the man began to exist, the Lord is. Everything comes to life from Him and for Him with his omnipotent Word. No one might ever say, *"I am before the Lord."* Men follow one another in history, the Lord remains. He is always the first in relation to every man. If he wants a person not to exist, he 2uycan decree his non-existence. If he wants him to disappear from history, he can intervene with his omnipotent decision.

It is a truth that man must put in his heart. He is of a very short duration on earth. Today he is in a position of command, tomorrow he is dust and ash. God, on the other hand, is eternal and immortal. On an eternal, immortal, almighty God, the only Lord of heaven and earth, man can base his hope. Instead, on man, no hope might be built. Not only is he not omnipotent, eternal, immortal and divine, he is also foolish, insolent, lacking in any intelligence. He does not even know if an action he places in history will be good or bad for him. Man often speaks, acts and decides from his spiritual, moral and intellectual blindness. No one knows what his decision will produce a moment later.

Man's hope is based on two essential truths: the purest and most holy knowledge of God and that of himself. God is. Man is not. If man is not, he can only found his hope in his God, Creator and Lord. He who is not cannot present himself as a source of certainty. It is infinite foolishness. If man is not a source of truth, he must necessarily find it in the One who is, that is, only in his Creator and Lord. Man might never be principle, truth, essence, foundation and home of life. He might be only if he becomes truth and holiness of the truth and holiness of his Lord.

*"And with the last I will also be."* The last are all those who recognize their truth of fragile, inconsistent, useless and vain beings, because they are neither spring nor source of power, truth, justice and charity. The last recognize their nullity and accept the justice, holiness, light and Word of God, choosing him as their home where to live. Last is the one who denies himself to immerse himself in God, in His Creator and Lord. He is immersed in God, welcoming his light, walking in his Word and always staying with Him; He is always with whom chooses and wants Him as his sole source and principle of his life.

The last are not those who are destroyed because of their sin, their foolishness, their insipidness and their vices. These are rich with themselves. Not even the last are the poor of things. They are only those who have chosen God as their Lord, delivering themselves to Him with all their being. They are the ones without life, without will, without wisdom, without intelligence and without doctrine, because they have renounced all their possessions to welcome the will, wisdom, intelligence, doctrine and light coming from their Creator. If man does not choose God, because he chooses himself, God might never be with him and he will always be without life, truth, light, justice, charity, love, mercy and piety. He will never be last for the Lord. All the history of man is God's invitation to choose Him, but also Satan's temptation so that he turns away from God and is made by himself.

This is the uninterrupted work of the true prophets of God and of every minister of his Word: inviting, exhorting, calling and spurring every man to choose God, choosing his Word, and lives according to his eternal truth. The man of God must always go to the man of God, with a word from the Lord. Isaiah creates hope in his people enslaved in foreign land, always speaking as God's man, prophesying in the hearts the truth of his God. What hope can we create in the hearts if we erase the truth of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the Church, of his grace, of his ministries and of the very eternity? We will be builders of false hope only.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, help the disciple of Jesus to present himself to the world always as his disciple, in his name, in his truth, in his Word and grace, in his light and holiness. Never allow a single Christian to come to man as a man without a Christ and without his mystery. This is a very high treachery of Christ, the only Creator and Founder of true hope; very high treason of himself, the only one that knows the way of hope; a very high treason of man, because it deprives him of the gift of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the Church, of the Gospel and of his grace and truth, condemning him to darkness in time and after it. Holy Mother, do not allow this to happen. The disciple of Jesus would be a death builder among men, death for the present and for future centuries.

***Father Costantino Di Bruno***

**Announcers and Witnesses of the Risen Lord**

Reflections from the homily of H.H. Francis in the Easter Vigil (15.4.2017)

Jesus is dead. Both the disciples and the women are depressed and afflicted, as the thought of the Resurrection does not touch them at all, this thought has never found room in their mind. In each of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus announces the mystery of his death and resurrection three times, but the disciples are not able to understand his words: "*Then he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon; and after they have scourged him they will kill him, but on the third day he will rise." But they understood nothing of this; the word remained hidden from them and they failed to comprehend what he said*" (Lk 18: 31-34).

It is in this climate of despair and affliction that God's Omnipotence breaks in history and upsets it, by fulfilling the most admirable work, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the central mystery of our faith*: "When the High Priest and the religious leaders, in collusion with the Romans, believed that they could calculate everything, that the final word had been spoken and that it was up to them to apply it, God suddenly breaks in, upsets all the rules and offers new possibilities.  God once more comes to meet us, to create and consolidate a new age, the age of mercy.  This is the promise present from the beginning.  This is God’s surprise for his faithful people.  Rejoice!  Hidden within your life is a seed of resurrection, an offer of life ready to be awakened"* (Homily).

And the risen Jesus manifests all his mercy by helping, sustaining and strengthening the faith of the disciples, a faith that had been put to the test by his crucifixion. Symptomatic is the famous Lucan text of the disciples of Emmaus. Jesus is presented them as a traveller and recovers them to true faith, not letting them to be lost.

And I think this is the mission that the Lord has delivered to the Apostolic Movement through the Mother of the Redemption: "The world has forgotten the Word of my Son Jesus. Do you want to remind it?" We all know that the foundation of true faith is the Word of Jesus, so it is announcing and reminding the Word of Jesus to the world that all those who have departed from it or have not yet joined it are recovered to the true faith. Jesus also helped these two disciples by explaining to them the Scriptures: "*And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures*" (Lk 24: 25-27).

This is the mercy that we must live in the world: restoring to true faith those who, for whatever reason, were detached from Jesus and his body which is the Church, announcing and witnessing them the Gospel. That is why the Resurrection of the Lord is not only a gift to be received, but it is also a gift to be offered to all men: *"The heartbeat of the Risen Lord is granted us as a gift, a present, a new horizon.  The beating heart of the Risen Lord is given to us, and we are asked to give it in turn as a transforming force, as the leaven of a new humanity"* (Homily).

Today, we Christians are called to rise to the mission! It is just the jubilant going to the world to preach the happy news that characterizes our Christian being and confirms that we truly believe in the Risen One and for this we announce him, because as the Apostle Peter we are convinced that: *"There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved"* (Acts 4:12). It is such a certainty of faith that must spur us and must drive us to proclaim and testify to Christ in the world. Besides, this is what the women did after having received from the angel the news of Jesus' resurrection: *"Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples"* (Mt 28, 8). And the same disciples of Emmaus, after meeting with the Risen Lord, returned to Jerusalem to give their testimony: *"So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread"* (Lk 24: 33-35).

Following the exhortation of the Holy Father, let us also be made announcers and witnesses of the Risen One: *"That is what this night calls us to proclaim: the heartbeat of the Risen Lord.  Christ is alive!  That is what quickened the pace of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.  That is what made them return in haste to tell the news (*Mt*28:8).  That is what made them lay aside their mournful gait and sad looks.  They returned to the city to meet up with the others. Now that, like the two women, we have visited the tomb, I ask you to go back with them to the city.  Let us all retrace our steps and change the look on our faces.  Let us go back with them to tell the news…  In all those places where the grave seems to have the final word, where death seems the only way out.  Let us go back to proclaim, to share, to reveal that it is true: the Lord is alive!  He is living and he wants to rise again in all those faces that have buried hope, buried dreams, buried dignity.  If we cannot let the Spirit lead us on this road, then we are not Christians"* (Homily). Therefore, it is necessary for the Christian to rise to the mission because it is from the announcement of the true Word of the Lord that man is recovered to true faith (if he had lost the faith) or embraces the true faith (if he did not have the faith); and it is from the true faith that a new and evangelical life, bearing salvation, pours out.

Virgin Mary, Mother of Redemption, help us be convinced that your diagnosis on the serious illness that afflicts the world (that is, the lack in it of the true Word of Jesus) is the right one, so that from today on we can begin to be witnesses of the Risen One and announcers of His Word, so as to be able to offer the world the only medicine that can cure its illness to the benefit of the eternal salvation of the men who want to receive such Word and adapt their lives to it.

***Father Alessandro Severino***

**I AM IN MY FATHER AND YOU ARE IN ME AND I IN YOU**

**(VI Easter Sunday Year A)**

**THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (At 8.5-8.14-17)**

The Church of God is a divinely structured body with personal and non-transferable ministries and charismas. Philip can baptize, he cannot give the Holy Spirit. This ministry is personal and it is of the Apostles. It is a non-delegable mandate. Today, this is the evil that creates chaos and confusion: everyone thinks he is capable of everything and everyone believes he can be enabled for everything and everyone can qualify for everything. Everyone must know what his ministry, his vocation, his charisma is and carry it out directly. Being gifts and ministries of the person, the person is the one who has to exercise them, sacrificing to them his own life. Peter is ministry of the Word, minister of the Holy Spirit and minister of Prayer. He does not delegate. He bestows ministry on others for other things, but is not divested of his responsibilities. He knows that he must give the Holy Spirit to the baptized in Christ Jesus, he goes to Samaria and lives his office with obedience.

**FOR A REASON FOR YOUR HOPE (1Pt 3.15-18)**

Christians have to endure every suffering, sorrow and persecution imitating Jesus the Lord, the one who suffered and died righteous for the unrighteous, to expiate the sin of the world, and pour every grace of salvation into the hearts. When the Christian is questioned by the world on the hope that moves him to live with love pain and suffering, then he can give the reason for the faith that animates him and his word will be true evangelization and true announcement of salvation. The Christian lives his faith in fullness of charity and hope. The world does not see his faith, but his charity and his hope. It asks for reason of hope and charity, and it is then that he might be able to unveil all the wealth and power of his faith in Christ Jesus, in the Crucified that is the Risen One. Thus, the life of charity and hope becomes the means, the way for a true announcement of Jesus. Evangelization begins with the explanation and enlightenment of the personal life.

**HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER ADVOCATE (Jn 14: 15-21)**

Jesus lives with two Paracletes: with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So also every disciple will have to be in Christ and in the Holy Ghost, to be in the Father. That is why Jesus speaks of *"another Paraclete"*. The first *"Paraclete"* is Himself. The second *"Paraclete"* is the Holy Spirit. What is the ministry of Christ and what that of the Spirit? The Christian must live in the "Paraclete" Christ to know every desire of Christ. He lives for Christ. He must deliver his life to Christ, by placing it in his will. But he also needs the second "Paraclete", that is, the Holy Spirit, for the perfect knowledge of the truth and charity with which Christ's will must be lived together with the necessary force that must always come from the Holy Spirit. The Christian cannot live either with Christ alone or with the Spirit alone. He must always live in Christ and in the Spirit. He must always live in the body of Christ that is the Church, for the Holy Spirit acts and works only in the body of Christ. Everything, is always in the body of Christ, for the body of Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

**MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS**

**(Ascension Of The Lord Year A)**

**A CLOUD TOOK HIM FROM THEIR SIGHT (At 1.1-11)**

The time of the Lord’s visible mission in history ends with his ascension and the invisible one begins. But the visible mission of his Apostles begins. But it is not two missions. The mission is one. The same as that of Christ, must be of the disciples. Christ's mission was that of revealing how great the Father's love for the salvation of man is. Christ Jesus manifested the Father's love from the cross, as a Crucifix. Now disciples must reveal how great the love of Jesus for every man is. How will they do this? By letting themselves be also crucified by the world for love of man. They will live this, if in the Holy Spirit they will let themselves be transformed into Christ, becoming one thing and one heart with Christ, just as Christ is one thing and one heart with the Father. Without the disciple's consecration to the truth of Christ, no mission will be of salvation and redemption.

**SEATING HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENS (Eph 1: 17-23)**

With the Ascension of Jesus every prophecy is fulfilled. Today Jesus receives the eternal kingdom. Today, he is invested by the Father of all power. Today, all the peoples are invited to serve Christ Jesus, but from now on the Apostles also will have to go to every man to announce that Christ is their King, their Lord, their Judge, their Saviour, Redeemer and God. Today, the prophecy itself is fulfilled with regard to the person of Christ. It will have to be carried out with regard to the confession of the truth of Christ on the part of all peoples. Whoever must ensure that the prophecy takes place, are the disciples of Jesus. They will have to invite every man to receive Jesus because Jesus is their only true King, but it is also for Jesus that they will become true children of the Father and also real men. Without Christ, without being dressed with his truth, they remain in an eternal falseness. This is the mission of the disciples: bringing every man to Christ, to their king.

**I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS (Mt 28,16-20).**

The visible mission of Christ ends with the ascension and the invisible one begins. Jesus must transform the Word of the disciples into life, salvation, redemption and justification. Jesus is like the earth. The earth turns every seed entrusted to it, placed in its bowels and in its bosom into a tree and a plant. Christ is the earth of grace, truth and life. If the disciple sows his Word, his Gospel, his Truth and his grace in the hearts, Christ immediately transforms into a tree of life what was sown by the disciple. On the contrary, if the disciple sows words of the world, Satan will be the one to make trees and fruits of death sprout. Never might Jesus transform a word of man into a tree and fruit of eternal life. When on earth there are no trees and fruits of truth and righteousness according to Christ, the responsibility is entirely of the Christian. He did not sow the good seed of Christ and Christ could not transform into a tree of life and into fruit of salvation the foolish, ignorant and insolent word of man. Christ knows only his Word and transforms into tree and fruits of eternal life only his Word.

**We young and ours expectatioins**

Some perspectives on the occasion of the IX International Convention of the Apostolic Movement and in view of the Synod of Youth

We are grateful to Pope Francis that wanted a synod for us young people. A few weeks ago, in his speech on the occasion of the World Youth Day, he interpreted a *vocation* that many young people, believers and not, feel like an aspiration: feeling that our life offers a *mission*. It does not come from our own inner need, but from the love of Christ himself, who interpellates us and involves us in his desire to give a soul to this world, to give the hope that comes from his Gospel, to give life with his charity.

In our turn, we stand in an attitude of listening, because we feel alive the need to be accompanied and supported in our growth as young people who, by holding hands, strive to prepare a better future, making the world more humane and welcoming.

Faced with the many anxieties and uncertainties of everyday reality, which could suffocate our impulse, we mean to say: "We young have a value to give". We want to attest this commitment with gratitude to the Lord who trusted us, calling us in the Apostolic Movement to bring the gospel to the man of today that does not know or forgot it.

We affirm this with so much affection and loyalty to our dear Pope Francis, who always infuses us all his esteem and his enlightening word that invites us to live the mission "with joy, with concreteness and with courage."

We testify it with much tenderness and gratitude for our inspirer Maria Marino, who never ceases to consume herself in charity at the service of Christ in the Church, and who wisely and maternally has always directed us, youth, to trust, to correctness, to exemplarity, to the mission to be lived in the family, work, parish and society.

The Holy Father asks us, young people to express our expectations and to interpellate listening on the part of the whole Church. We do not wish to ask for anything, but to put our talents at disposal with realism and confidence. After all, our research could be expressed through these interrogatives:

- Christ wants to go meet the world, even through us: what ways to run through does the Church point to us today?

- How can we interpret and implement in concrete terms the need of witness towards our peers and dialogue among generations, which Pope Francis often recommends us with care?

It is in this spirit of communion and co-responsibility that young people expect from greater consideration and involvement.

Thanks to the Holy Father and Pastors of the Church for their proximity and for their accompaniment.

May the Virgin Mary help us to always walk together, to put all the energies in the service of a more true, more just, more united society that makes the hope and peace of the risen Christ visible and concrete for every man.

*Antonio Afeltra*

**IDOLATRY...**

The Lord asks for your conversion,

man.

For your brothers to be converted,

you must model yourself on Christ

and follow his example

of humility and obedience.

If his feelings of peace and truth

reign in you,

you build the Church.

Do not excuse yourself and do not say:

"The flesh is weak."

Prayer and sacraments

will turn you away from scandal.

Do not allow

your brother to fall into sin.

Lift your sight to heaven and ponder:

"One day even for me the sun will darken

and the light will not shine again.

My power and my wealth,

my pride and my vanity

will vanish into nothingness.

If I will not have been converted,

I will perish in darkness for eternity ".

Fear the righteous judgment of God,

man,

and do not think that the Lord, good and merciful,

also justifies evil.

He forgives the sinner that gets converted,

that returns to the fold,

that abandons the way of injustice and iniquity.

Man, in the kingdom of darkness,

in which you live,

too many scandals,

too many abominations and infamies are committed;

orgies and false prophecies rage,

you live as an iniquitous person,

you perjure with great ease,

the people of God is trained in ignorance and in heresy.

These are very severe sins

that offend the Lord our God.

Idolatry is by now a universal religion.

Man,

go back to the fold, be reconciled with your God

and he will be reconciled with you.

***Maria Marino***