

The importance of being a visible sign of the presence of God among men

Last 14 March, at Catanzaro, Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bologna was the one to close the Apostolic Movement's II National Convention on the theme: «Whoever is in Christ is a new creation» (2Cor 5,17).

Over 1200 the believers arrived from more parts of Italy and also from abroad who with the very presence of the Apostolic Movement's inspirer and founder Maria Marino, for two days, listened to the Shepherds.

It was up to Monsignor Costantino Di Bruno, Central ecclesiastical assistant, and the President of the association, Cettina Marraffa, to give the greeting to the Bishop and all the people present, confirming the mission of the Apostolic Movement, that has as its charisma the announcement and memory of the Word, with a live and joyous witness, in perfect adhesion to the faith, charity and hope, which are the soul of the Church founded on the live rock which is Peter and on the Apostles. «Your presence among us – that is how president Marraffa addressed the Cardinal –, in this conclusive day of our II National Convention, is a motive of big joy, since as a Bishop and Cardinal, successor of the apostles, you bring us the gifts of Christ the Lord, his truth».

In the first part the Rossano-Cariati Archbishop, Monsignor Santo Marciànò, developed a speech on the theme: «With age-old love I have loved you» (Jer 31,3). «We Christians – Bishop Marciànò said – often let us be taken either by fear or by false respect of all the opinions, even because we are accused of “getting scandalized”. But the real scandal is the betrayal of love, of the truth of love, of the eternity of love».

While the Catanzaro-Squillace Metropolitan Archbishop, Monsignor Antonio Ciliberti, gave a pastoral reading on the reality of the Apostolic Movement, underlining, with the love of a father, that «whoever met Christ cannot keep him for himself, he must give, announce him. Giving Christ, you give the brother all sorts of goodness». Therefore, the bishop praised the Lord for having generated in the Catanzaro Church the Apostolic Movement, encouraging the priests and all the adherents «with perseverance, to be visible signs of the presence of God among men».

Cardinale Caffarra, with various instructive examples and quotations, with clearness gave a reading to the existential theme of the Pauline statement chosen for the convention «Whoever is in Christ is a new creation» (2Cor 5,17).

To the Bologna Archbishop «the meeting with Christ fishes in the depth of the being, since Christ is “felt” as the real and total answer to the own unlimited desire of beatitude». «Whoever is in Christ – the cardinal said – searches with his reason the answer in the light of Christ, in the light of the very Wisdom of God. That is why a believer's reason is driven to train to the maximum, without precluding anything. A new culture is starting».

Bringing as an example the apostle Paul's life, who, almost, ran through all the Roman Empire to announce Christ; and Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who became the pure «witness of love»; the Bologna Archbishop underlined with force that «whoever meets with Christ, cannot be silent, like the Apostolic Movement that must express the beauty of this call among men. We can know all the Christian doctrine, but this is not enough for the heart to be moved by a presence, by the experience of a person that loves you».

A live and present sentiment in the heart of the founder of the Apostolic Movement, Maria Marino, who since 1979 has been answering with love to the call of the Lord, inviting humanity to conversion, in order to be a «precious» sign in a live, necessary and indispensable Church, willed by the action of God's spirit that does not cease operating.

Giovanni Scarpino