

The joy of the Gospel

Spirituality and mission of the Apostolic Movement in the light of Evangelii Gaudium

In this pastoral year, the internal training path proposed to adhering members on the spirituality and mission of the Apostolic Movement is centred on Evangelii Gaudium's apostolic exhortation. The reason is essentially twofold. On the one hand, EG is the programmatic document of the pontificate of Francis; the Holy Father himself entrusted the Italian Church, gathered in Florence in 2015, the task of deepening this document. Feeling cum Ecclesia, with the Church, has always been one of the distinguishing marks of the Apostolic Movement, constantly exhorted by its founder, Maria Marino, to be formed on the documents of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, attentive and docile to the voice of the Church, mother and teacher in the faith. Secondly, EG invests fully in its fundamental theme - the proclamation of the Gospel - the charisma of the Apostolic Movement. Therefore, it is understood that a formative path of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation can offer the unique opportunity to reflect on the charisma, identity and mission of the Apostolic Movement, in the light of the Pontifical Magisterium, that is, in listening to what the Spirit, through the Vicar of Christ, asks the Church in this precise historical moment.

The structure of the path is recalculated on the contents of EG, reflected in the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement. Ten general themes are thus proposed, in turn divided into two insights, each of which is assigned a card. The card proposes some passages of the apostolic exhortation, which constitute the reference source for those who hold the meeting. Bible reference

books are also proposed, which can feed reflection on the subject matter.

The themes proposed are:

1. Joy of the Gospel
 - A. Feeding joy to become missionaries: personal encounter with Christ
 - B. Evangelizers with funeral faces? Being joyful missionaries
2. "An exiting" Movement
 - A. The remembrance of the Word forgotten by the World: called to "exit"
 - B. The house from which to go out and to return to: parish centrality
3. A divine proclamation made to fit man
 - A. Announcing the Gospel speaking the Language of men
 - B. The missionary's "open heart"
4. The way of the Person
 - A. The proclamation from person to person
 - B. Personal accompanying
5. The temptations of the missionary disciple
 - A. The selfish sloth
 - B. The spiritual worldliness
6. The Church, missionary disciples community
 - A. Missionary disciples: training and mission in the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement
 - B. Particular charismas and ecclesial communion
7. Fundamental characteristics of announcement and catechesis
 - A. The centrality of kerygma
 - B. Sacred Scripture, the source of evangelization
8. The social dimension of the announcement
 - A. Love for the poor
 - B. Taking care of fragility
9. The spirituality of the missionary
 - A. The Importance of spiritual life for the adherent of the Apostolic Movement
 - B. Along with the Mother of evangelization: the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement and B.V.Mary
10. Urgencies and challenges of evangelization
 - A. Overcoming divisions
 - B. The young

Give Caesar what is Caesar's

History, the fruit of foolishness and ignorance of man, must always be straightened by the Lord with his grace and perennially illuminated by Him with the powerful light of his truth. However, God ordinarily acts through those whom he has chosen and constituted mediators of his grace and truth. If the mediators fail, or carry out awkwardly, with no passion and zeal, deprived themselves of light and grace, history will continue its crazy race toward evil and perdition.

As Christ Jesus, sent by the Father, is light, life and grace and always from his body come light, life and grace, so it must be of every one of his mediators or ministers. If they are not light, life and grace, never might light or grace, or life and or wisdom come from their body, necessary to straighten history and lead it from darkness to light and from the death of sin to the resurrection through their powerful mediation. As Christ is light, life and truth from the light, life and truth of the Father, so every mediator in Christ must be light, life and truth, from the light, truth and life of Jesus Christ.

The moment the mediator is detached even for a single instant from Jesus Christ, he is like the vine stock cut off or severed from the vine. It receives no lymph anymore and gets dry. It is right that we ask ourselves: but who is Christ on whom you ought to be permanently grafted? Our true Christ is his body, it is his Church, in which each mediator must be grafted necessarily

to every other mediator. The Holy Spirit is of the body of Christ and acts in the body of Christ and from the body of Christ to form the body of Christ. One can never think of destroying the body of Christ, separating from it and at the same time building it. The body of Christ is built from within the body of Christ, becoming we the true body of Christ, according to the law of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is asked if it is right to pay the tribute to Caesar (see Mt 22: 15-21). If Jesus was not in the Holy Spirit, according to the rules of the Spirit, he could have given a response of convenience, or even an unresponsive response that would have left history in a darkness without any possibility of being today, tomorrow and always brought back into the true light. Instead, his answer in the Holy Spirit gives holy light to every man, teaching him that he lives of two obediences, not just one: obedience to God according to the laws of God and obedience to man according to the laws of man.

The matter, including our body, is of Caesar. The soul is God's and must always be donated to God. Jesus made this teaching clear on Golgotha. He gave his body to Caesar and gave the Spirit to his Father. The Crucifix is all in his word. May the Mother of Jesus, the One who has always given to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's, help us to live this light and this eternal wisdom of her Son.

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Guardians and Witnesses of God's Love for Man

Reflections from the Speech of H.H. Francis
to the Bishops of Colombia (Bogotá, 7/9/2017)

Addressing the Bishops, Peter's Successor embraced the entire Colombian Church, thus reaching her every member: priests, consecrated people, families, young people, lay people engaged in every field of human life. Speaking to them, he recalled the identity that derives from the sacramental conformation to Christ and, therefore, the peculiarity of their ministry that connotes them as pastors of the people of God.

This constant call to the figure and action of the Bishop has outlined in a clear way the true identity of the Pastor who, transcending the historical contingencies given by the various socio-cultural contexts, sets himself as a reference model for each Bishop of all time and place.

Within the sphere of the universal mission of the Church, which is that of "generating, nourishing and accompanying" her children, the Bishop, the instrument and sacrament of Christ Jesus, is called upon by his work to give peace, light, truth and grace so that hearts can be overwhelmed and transformed by the very life of God. Far from becoming "officials bent on the dictatorship of the present" or "technicians and politicians" called upon to resolve the various instances urged by several parties, Pastors care about freely proclaiming the Word not to an ideal but to a concrete man, "made of flesh and bone, history, faith, hope, feelings, disappointments, frustrations, sorrows and wounds".

In this regard, the Church is urgently invited to be always on the move, in progress, on mission in a world deeply marked and characterized by multiple an-

tinomies.

An emphasis on intense pastoral care, the Holy Father has reserved to the dimension of the Bishop-Priest relationship, from which emerges one of the qualities that fully belong to the Bishop's identity and, that is, his paternity.

"What can you give to your priests? The first gift is that of your paternity, that assures that the hand that generated and anointed them is not withdrawn from their lives. The heart of a father, of a bishop, cannot just be limited to communicating with his presbytery in a precarious, impersonal and outward manner. Priests need, urgently and vitally, the physical and emotional closeness of their bishop. They need to feel they have a father."

The solicitude of the Pastors regarding their first associates, the priests, begins already long before their Ordination, when they begin their training paths in the seminaries. In this context, the Bishop is placed as the guardian of every vocation, the one who is in charge of discernment, training and care. He is the "natural" Master of those who will have to consecrate themselves to God in the ordained ministry. This particular solicitude that characterizes each Shepherd is the eloquent sign of Jesus' imitation, who consecrated all the time of his public life to the call, choice and formation of his Apostles. Moreover, this solicitude is the sign of the great love that lives in the heart of each Bishop for the Church, whose life depends precisely on the ordained priesthood.

Father Luciano Palombo

The Lord's Day
XIX Sunday
O.T. Year A

WHY ARE YOU TESTING ME, YOU HYPOCRITES?

FOR THE SAKE OF JACOBBE, MY SERVANT (Is 45,1,4-6)

In the love of the Lord for Jacob, every other man is enclosed. Do we know what the Lord did for the sake of his servant and in him for every other man? For love he freed him from slavery, split the sea into two, for forty years has made bread rain from heaven, made water flow from the hard rock, has given him a land to live in, the land where rivers make milk and honey flow. Now that he is in exile in the land of Babylon, he raises for his release a man, Cyrus, in whose heart he places the desire to do good to the people of God. This love does not end in these mere works alone. For the love of man he also gives his Son from the cross, as a Crucifix. Still today for man's love, the whole body of Christ is given for the redemption of humanity. Every man must let himself be overwhelmed by the love of the Lord, but also let himself be made a gift, in Christ Crucified, for the redemption of every other man.

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS FOR ALL OF YOU (1Ts 1,1-5b)

Paul spread the Gospel in Thessalonica. In that region it fell onto good ground. Now, it is producing fruit of true faith, hope and charity. Is this perhaps the merit of Paul? In no way. Everything is merit of the Lord. From the Lord he was called into those lands. Through grace God found welcoming hearts and for it these hearts made the sown Gospel be fruitful. If all is God's grace and benevolence, all thanks, blessings and praise must go to Him. We cannot receive the merit of what is not ours, because it is God's. If it is of God, what is

his must be given him: merit. He must be thanked not only because he made us an instrument of his love, but also because he gives us the joy to see that our work is not in vain in him. Even perseverance in sowing is a gift and grace of God. All comes from him and for all He has to be blessed for centuries. True faith begins with true thanksgiving.

WHOSE IMAGE IS THIS AND WHOSE INSCRIPTION? (Mt 22,15-21)

To Jesus just one word is enough to give the entire history an eternal truth on which to steer its steps without deviating either to the right or to the left. He gives fullness of truth to history, giving fullness of truth to man. This is a special creature. He is made of soul and body, of immortality and time, which are indivisible and inseparable. The soul governs the body, eternity determines time. If we deprive man of soul and eternity, everything is enveloped in darkness and falsehood. The body must be given to men, the soul must be given to God. Time must be delivered to eternity. Lord of man are Caesar and God. To God must be given what is of God, soul, and spirit. To Caesar must be handed over what is Caesar's: the body of man. Matter to matter, earth to earth, spirit to the Spirit, soul to God to be tomorrow in the eternal light. You cannot split a man in two: either all of God or all of Caesar, all of eternity or all of time, all spirit or all body. He must be entirely of time and eternity, of God and of Caesar, of the matter and of the Spirit. In Christ this will be possible.

by the Theologian, **Father Costantino Di Bruno**