

NOTES - LIKE DEW SENT BY THE LORD. REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSECRATED LIFE

I would like to start from a moving prophecy of the Old Testament, that of Micah (5,1): "But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; Whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. [...] He himself will be peace!"

An implicit reference to Micah is found in the second chapter of Luke, which speaks of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the city of David, and of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple of Jerusalem. This last passage is proclaimed during the Eucharistic celebration on 2 February.

Therefore, in the geography of the chapter two places emerge: the little Bethlehem and the famous Jerusalem where a man, Simeon, awaits the consolation of Israel and, with his eyes of the Holy Spirit, recognizes in a fragile newborn the Redeemer of the world. Even the prophetess Anna joins the praises of the child and speaks of Him to those who await Redemption. As a lay consecrated person in a secular institute named "Mary Mother of the Redemption", I am struck by the fact that two seeming 'strangers' capture in the child, physically seen for the first time in that moment, the Messiah who redeems us. Simeon anticipates even the future, alluding to the mystery of suffering that must envelop both Jesus and his mother. Simeon acts for a particular motion

of the Spirit that is on him, but his figure suggests the prophetic creativity that even in the ordinary must belong to the consecrated, who cannot adapt to the logic of survival and spiritual mediocrity.

Simeon's gaze, illuminated by the glow of the Spirit, breaks through the line of historical time, runs towards the past, which finds its completeness in Christ, and designs the future. Simeon and Anna know Christ because they speak the same language: that of the Spirit of the Lord, the only authentic interpreter of the truth of the Holy Scriptures. It is the language unknown to doctors of the law, scribes, Pharisees, even to the theologians who use the letter of Scripture for purposes that are not of salvation. Thus every secular Institute or religious life, respecting roles, ministries and specific charismas, should enter this prophetic energy in the historical flow that animates structures, situations and institutions; it should make all things new by 'expanding' its original charisma which, in the case of the Apostolic Movement, is the proclamation and remembrance of the Word of God. This is the obedience that must be manifested through the ecclesial and personal identity of each one. But how will we talk about Jesus and make his presence be felt in everyday life, which is often soaked with pain and injustice, if we do not know Him and we do not know Him because we do not grow, as He did, in grace and truth?

So, the wish that I address to myself first before and then to others is that of being the 'rest of Jacob' mentioned by Micah, the holy people that hears the voice of Christ and expects nothing from man and everything from Jesus, our peace, because he is..

Like dew coming from the Lord, like raindrops on the grass, Which wait for no man, nor tarry for the sons of men (MI 5, 6).

Anna Guzzi

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"Mary, Mother of the Redemption"

Blessed is the Kingdom that comes of our father David!

Jesus never allowed misinterpretations, misunderstandings, ideas or thoughts not of God to arise, on his mission as king, prophet and priest of the new covenant. He has always moved in the most pure truth of the Father, revealed in the Law, in the Prophets and in the Psalms. He is not a king of this world. He came not to subjugate the peoples to another people, but to make of every man the people of his Father, to whom all would have been led by the Holy Spirit to the fullness of the truth of God, of man, of things, of time and of eternity. Jesus having entered Jerusalem and fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, he unequivocally testifies to his nature as king. He is a meek and humble king, without any earthly power at his disposal. The donkey is an animal of peace and not of war.

What Jesus Christ has done in his body, according to the received sacrament or the charismas he has received as a gift, must be lived by every one of his disciples. Everyone must by sacramental and charismatic obligation, remain in his purest truth and must let himself be led by the Holy Spirit to all the truths of the sacrament received or of the gift given to him. If he comes out of this unchangeable obligation, he causes a very serious damage to himself, to the whole body of Christ and to the whole of humanity. God has established that from the truth of the individual disciple is the truth of the body of Christ and from the truth of the body of Christ is the truth of humanity. One understands then what wound is caused in the whole universe if the Christian shows himself to the

Church and the world different than his truth, which is not given to him just for him, but is given to him for the whole world.

Are we Christians aware of this responsibility? If we were, first of all we would not misrepresent the truth contained in the sacraments. Today there is an attempt by many to transform the very truth of the grace. There is a wrong, false education, not in conformity with the truth of the Holy Spirit, which then becomes falsehood of life, ministry and teaching. But even the Word of God and of Christ Jesus are wrapped in the same evil. There is by now a widespread tendency for everyone to base his life on one Word of the Gospel and, moreover, separated from its content of origin. It will be well understood that from such a doctrinal context it cannot follow but a diffused idolatry. Everyone worships his God according to his thoughts. When theological truth collapses, moral truth also collapses. They are inextricably linked like the tree and the fruit. The irresponsibility of one never justifies the irresponsibility of the other. Everyone is called individually to present himself before the Church and the world with his perfect truth, wrapped in the light of the Holy Spirit. May the Mother of God and our Mother not allow this to happen. May she be the one to take care of the body of Christ and place it under the constant assistance of the Holy Spirit, so that today and always everyone shows the truth of the sacrament, of the charism and of the Word which are the essence of his life.

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DO YOU ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE?

*Reflections starting from the Message of H.H. Francis
for the 33rd World Youth Day (25.3.2018)*

"... Do you accept the challenge?" Let's start from the end: the message for WYD 2018 is truncated with this question left open, to which the Pope himself cannot give an answer. Because there is no equal answer for everyone and everyone will have to write it with his own life.

What challenge does the Holy Father invite to accept? It is the unique and unrepeatable perspective of one's vocation: "Dear young people, the Lord, the Church, the world, also await your response to the unique call that everyone has in this life!" And the invitation to WYD becomes a metaphor of life, to be accepted as a very personal and irreplaceable mission: in this sense, the vocation is not meant for "young people who seek only comfort and who draw back in front of difficulties. Do you accept the challenge?"

The appeal re-launched by the Pope has its principle of reference in the invitation addressed by the Angel to the Virgin Mary. A unique invitation in the history of salvation, based on a certainty: "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favour with God" (Lk 1:30). First of all, the Lord reassures Mary, with that word full of understanding and trust: "Do not be afraid". The disturbance of Mary is the holy tremor "before the mystery of God's call, which in a moment puts her before the immensity of her own design and makes her feel all the smallness of a humble creature".

«Do not be afraid» is the assurance that the Lord addresses every young person placed in front of his vocation, in front of a yes «on which all that we are and what we will do in this world depends». The Lord calls each one by name and knows the reasons for all our fear; but we too are called to discern them, to give them a name, to face them, so that they do not stop us from going forward. Not so

much on the basis of our capacity of introspection or self-motivation, but on the grace of the Lord. He who knows us, the One who calls us from Above, is himself the reason for our strength, if we listen to him in his Word, invoke him in prayer, receive his mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation and welcome him in the Eucharist.

And in this journey of discernment and personal response no one is alone. "Know that you can count on the Church", the Pope explains to the young. And he reminds them: "I know that there are good priests, male and female consecrated, lay faithful, many of them young in their turn, who can accompany you as brothers and sisters in the faith; animated by the Holy Spirit they will know how to help you decipher your doubts and read the design of your personal vocation».

Why then does the Pope speak of a "challenge"? Because the mystery of one's vocation "is not pure chance and a mere struggle for survival", nor an invincible destiny. The vocation is the mystery of God's grace, personally entrusted to our freedom, so that it may be recognized, accepted, protected from pitfalls and made to grow with perseverance. "Each of us is a history loved by God". This does not mean that every day it does not present its problems and its uncertainties, or that tomorrow holds no longer any mystery. Yet "the unknown that tomorrow reserves us is not a dark threat to which we must survive, but a favourable time that is given to us to live the uniqueness of our personal vocation and share it with our brothers and sisters in the Church and in the world». The challenge starts every day. But "if God is for us, who will be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Mother of the Redemption, our yes goes to you.

Father Francesco Brancaccio

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD
(SUNDAY OF THE PALMS AND OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD - B)

THE LORD GOD IS MY HELP (Is 50.4-7)
The Messiah of the Lord, the true Messiah will be the man of indescribable suffering. All the wickedness of the world will fall on Him, religious and pagan malevolence, of believers and non-believers, of friends and enemies and of neighbours and distant ones. Might He bear such a great insult, offense that reaches up to the crucifixion of his body? Might he offer his whole self to his God as a very pure holocaust? Might he live as a crucifix in the most sublime holiness? He might because the Lord assists him. He is next to him to give him courage. The Lord will spur him to a full obedience and He will deliver himself to pain for the love of his God. This is the great secret of Jesus. He has conquered the world, because he has never been alone. He was always assisted by the Father. Suffering, pain and death can be lived in holiness, only for the great love of the Lord. We give life to the Father and the Father gives us the strength to offer it to him.

HE EMPTIED HIMSELF (Phil 2,6-11)
Jesus is God in his Person and divine nature. We know that the divine nature is not subject to any suffering. On the cross it is as if the Person and the divine nature had abandoned the humanity of Christ to itself so that suffering could completely fall upon Him and the Holocaust was perfect. In truth the Person and the divine nature never separated from the true man. The hypostatic union is irreversible forever. But this is the emptying: the non-intervention of the deity in support of his human nature. On the cross Jesus was helped only by his great love for the Father. Saint Paul asks Chri-

stians for the same behaviour of Christ Crucified. Whoever wants to serve, and this is the daily cross of the Christian, must be emptied of his human greatness and make love for the Father only triumph in him. We remain what we are, because otherwise we could not serve, but we empty ourselves out of love.

**I BEG YOU FOR THE LIVING GOD
(Mk 14,1-15,47)**

Jesus is in the Sanhedrin. They are looking for false witnesses to find an at least probable accusation, even if invented. But they are not found. The defendant cannot be convicted in a legal manner. If he were to be condemned, his judges would pass on the side of falsehood, deception and lies before the world. The high priest does not give himself up and he asks Jesus a question under oath. When one is under oath one cannot answer except by declaring the truth, even at the price of life. Jesus attests his truth. Not only is He the Christ of God, his Messiah, He is also the Son of Man, in whose hands the Father, God, will place all power. He will come on the clouds of heaven to judge every man. From the clouds he will govern the whole universe. The Father, God, has placed everything in his hands. The high priest accuses him of blasphemy and has him sentenced to death. Jesus is the martyr of his truth. Today, this is lacking to his disciples: martyrdom for their truth. Rather than being a Christian martyr, it is he who kills the truth, this way he may not profess it and walk according to his heart.

*by the theologian,
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