

BOOKS - D. Francesco Cristofaro, "My yes to the Lord"

Published the new book by Father Francesco Cristofaro, entitled **"My yes to the Lord. Testimonies of faith and life"** (Tau publisher), a text directed at the Synod of Youth at the first reprint in just under a month. Ten testimonies. A common thread links these stories: the encounter with Jesus, with joy and Truth, after a period tormented by many questions and unresolved sorrows. The protagonists have trusted Him and their life has changed.

The author, fr. Francesco, was born with a spastic paresis in his legs, he fought for many years to accept himself and be accepted. "God bets there where man does not. He took my paraplegic legs and made them strong and today I go around Italy to bear my testimony." «Among the 10 stories, the first one is mine - says the young parish priest. I hated mirrors that reminded me of my way of walking. There were already many people doing it when they looked at me from the waist down, victim of people's piety or of being told by kids: "You cannot come and play with us". Only the true encounter with Christ and not with false prophets, with magicians and charlatans, have changed my life. Today I am happy. I no longer ask for physical healing but a great love for my life and that of others. This love the Lord has granted to me".

There are men who do not believe in miracles, there are others who believe that everything is a miracle and there are men who have made their lives a living miracle.

"The true miracle in my opinion - the author of the book adds - lies in the extraordinary nature of how these lives were lived by the protagonists, that is, with the awareness that the Lord is at all times refuge, support and strength and as much as we men we can be good, "smart", nothing can come to us if not under the loving gaze of God and with his blessing".

Who has not been traversed by suffering, by pain? Who has not fought? Who has not encountered moments of discouragement? Who, at a certain point, raising his eyes to heaven or refusing to do so, has not thought or said: "Are you there Lord?", "Where are you Lord?", "You have forsaken me Lord!". And even Danilo and Giovita, in a moment of great loss of faith, said: "the Lord does not exist ..."; or Vincenzina, looking for ways to die; Nicola, who consoled himself in easy women and drugs...

"But the Lord has not abandoned us to our thoughts. He came, knocked harder, insisted until each of us did open the door of his heart. He met us in different places and streets, each with his own history but in every history he put his light on it and we started to shine and so, under the shadow of his great mercy, our life became a masterpiece and we found peace and the desire to be witnesses of this meeting of grace".

In these stories there is life, there are the daily struggles, the hopes of the world, of men. The joys and anxieties of those called to priesthood and consecrated life, the joys and anxieties of parents, spouses, young people, those who struggle with life and so at the end, you will find that you can also live at the end of the world, hundreds and thousands of miles away, but you will always be men and women on a journey. And Jesus? He will be there if you want, otherwise as Stefano and Gianna will remind us: "Without him we certainly would not have made it. It would have surely been another life!"



As the Father has loved me

Jesus reveals to his disciples that he loves them in the same way that the Father has loved him. It is right then to be asked: how did the Father love Jesus? Generating him in the beginning, giving him life, constituting him Saviour, Redeemer, Truth, Life, Way, Grace, Justice, Holiness and universal Mediator of every relationship between Him and all humanity. God gives nothing and says nothing to men except through Jesus. Men cannot access him except through Jesus. How did Jesus love his disciples? Generating them as his true body and true adoptive sons of the Father, making them be born of water and the Holy Spirit and constituting them in him, with him, through him, universal mediators of his salvation, redemption, truth, life, way, grace, justice and sanctity. For the disciples to Christ, for Christ to the Father. The disciples are essential and irreplaceable way to go to Christ and for Christ to go to the Father.

They are in great error all those who exclude Jesus to go to the Father, asserting that every way is good to reach God. If Jesus is excluded, even the disciples of Jesus are excluded. Every reality that was born of Jesus, which comes from his Word, is useless, vain and superfluous. Superfluous is the Church, the sacraments and the disciples themselves. Superfluous are the Gospel, sacred doctrine, morality, theology, asceticism and mysticism. If one can go to God from anywhere, what is the use of Jesus and what comes from Him? It is very pure truth: those who do not go to God through the way of Jesus and to Jesus through the way of the one, holy, catho-

lic and apostolic Church, will never reap a single fruit of true salvation. Those who profess these things, do nothing other than testify that Jesus is a liar and a deceiver, because he has declared to be the only way and he is not. There are many other ways. He proclaimed himself the truth, the light, the grace and the eternal life and these goods can be enjoyed without him.

A small observation must be made. Those who exclude Jesus as the only way to go to the Father and the Church as the instrument through which Jesus comes to us and we go to Him, are all out of the Word of Jesus. When we leave the Word, we are always outside the truth of Jesus and falsehood is always professed as the way of salvation and redemption. When Jesus is again crucified, the reason is always the same: our non-inhabitation in the purest Word of the Gospel. He remains in the love of Jesus who remains in his Word. You get out of the Word, you fall from love, you are governed by all falsehood and lies. When the death of Jesus is declared, the death of the Gospel is always declared. When the death of the Gospel is declared, the death of Jesus is always declared. Jesus is the Gospel and the Gospel is Jesus. One gets out of Jesus and he gets out of the Gospel. You get out of the Gospel you get out of Jesus. It is hard to believe in the Gospel for those who do not believe in Jesus. But it is also impossible to believe in Jesus if you do not believe in the Gospel. Mother of God, help us to revive our faith in Jesus to believe in the Gospel and in the Gospel to believe in Jesus.

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LOVE FOR CHRIST IS TRUE WHEN WE LOVE THE CHURCH

Reflections starting from the Speech of H.H. Francis
in the 50th anniversary of the death of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina
(Pietrelcina, 17.3.2018)

According to what he himself affirmed during his pastoral visit to Pietrelcina, Father Pius, a humble Capuchin friar, known as "he has amazed the world with his life dedicated wholly to prayer and patient listening of the brothers". Like all the saints, his heroic example of faith and his virtues must urge us Christians to live as instruments of the love of the Crucified, relating us as such to God and to each brother.

His existence showed full love not only for Jesus and for the people that went to him, but also, especially, for the Church. In fact, Father Pius "loved the Church with all her problems and with all her troubles".

This last aspect should lead us to reflect on many issues that affect today's life. In fact, today, because of scandalous behaviour and moral ugliness of us men, it is easy to be scandalized, to falter in faith and to lack respect for the Church herself, considered guilty of every evil. It is easy to generalize.

Instead, St. Pius teaches us that love for Christ is true when we love the Church with an attitude of "unconditional loyalty". This principle for us Christians is necessary. First of all, we must bear witness to the world on how communion is built: "only communion - that is, being always united, in peace among us and communion among us - builds up and erects". Therefore, the Pope urges us to imitate the meekness of the Saint of Pietrelcina, inviting us to always live in harmony with everyone. A solicitation valid for each person and for each place: "A country that

quarrels every day does not grow, it is not built; it scares people. It is a sick and sad country".

Moreover, Saint Pius was a man of intense prayer. The various testimonies remind him always assiduous in praying. It was the secret from which every day, he drew strength to "adhere ever better to the divine designs" and, above all, to overcome temptations, since "he was strongly tormented in his heart and feared to fall into sin". The Holy Friar can be defined as a "living example" of what the Gospel asks of each of us: "Watch and pray, so as not to fall into temptation. The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 2.41). He loved Jesus in an intense way; He trusted Him. This is why, above all, in the "terrible moments, Padre Pious drew vital life from the constant prayer and trust he knew how to place in the Lord".

Finally, Saint Pius was a great "lover" of the Eucharist. The celebration of Holy Mass constituted the heart of every day. Thanks to it, he acquired the fullness of his spirituality and reached a high level of union with the Lord. As the various testimonies attest, he was "attracted by a superior force before joining Him in the morning in the sacrament."

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help us to imitate the virtues of the Saint of Pietrelcina in order to be able, like him, to love Jesus crucified and the Church, living as authentic witnesses of the Gospel in the world.

Father Alessandro Carioti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

THIS I COMMAND YOU: LOVE ONE ANOTHER
(VI SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B)

BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS
CHRIST (Acts 10: 25-26.34-35.44-48)

The mission of the true salvation of man must always be accomplished by the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the Apostle of the Lord. The Father sends the Son in the Holy Spirit. The Son in the Holy Spirit must be brought by the Apostle of the Lord. For the Apostle of the Lord the Holy Spirit who is in the Word of the Apostle enters hearts, converts them to the mystery of Christ, in whom is the true mystery of the Father and of man. God sends Cornelius to make Peter come to his house. The Lord manifests his will of salvation of the pagans to Peter. His Apostle is afraid of baptizing Cornelius and his family. The Holy Spirit precedes him and visibly settles on those who are in the house. If the Holy Spirit has settled on Cornelius as he has settled on the Apostles, can Peter prevent them from being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Today the great absent in the mission is the Spirit of God in the missionary.

SO THAT WE MIGHT HAVE LIFE
THROUGH HIM (1Jn 4,7-10)

Today, our faith seems to have been deprived of an essential, primary, fundamental and substantial truth. The Christian is strongly convinced that he can go to God according to the truth of God, that is as a true, new, just and holy man, transformed in body, spirit and soul, without passing through Christ Jesus. Jesus Lord is the eternal irreplaceable. He is the way, the truth, the life and the light. In Him he must be immersed who wants to be the way, the truth, the life and the light in himself so as to manifest to every other man Christ, his

truth, way, light and life in order to be saved. If Christ Jesus is betrayed, denied, banished and exiled from our relationship with God, the God of whom we say we are worshipers is an idol, because he is the fruit of our mind and our heart. Christ is not only the heart of true faith. He is our true faith. One takes Christ away, one is no longer in Christ and he is cut from true salvation. Without Christ everything is a pure illusion.

AS I LOVED YOU (Jn 15: 9-17)

The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the disciples. The disciples must love one another in the same way that Christ loved them. How did Christ love them? Offering life to the Father for their salvation. The love of Christ for them was of eternal redemption. The love of the disciples must be of divine salvation. If a disciple is not interested in the divine salvation of the other disciple, might he ever be interested in the eternal salvation of the world? If a disciple lets the other disciple go on a path of perdition and nothing works for his eternal redemption, might he ever do anything for others? Even if he did, he would not be credible. He is not obeying his Lord's command that wants his disciple to be eternal salvation for the other disciple before anything else. This is the great evil that afflicts our faith. Today we think of the suburbs, but we cannot see that the disciple that is next to us is on the road to perdition. He is not even seen on the road to perdition. But if you do not see the disciple, can you see who is not yet a disciple of the Lord?

by the theologian

Father Costantino Di Brunó