

## Catanzaro: Youth of the Apostolic Movement on a pilgrimage in view of the X Convention

Saturday, November 10 for us young people of the Movement a day different than others has been planned, a day in which it was possible to grasp values that very often escape us. We visited the Catholic of Stilo and the evocative natural grotto of Mount Stella, home to a Marian shrine.

Having departed from the S. Janni church, we arrived at the Catholic where we were able to admire the simple beauty of the Byzantine church, full of symbols that time has partially consumed, listening to the explanation of our guide Fr Davide on the link with the number "4" of the columns, the small domes and frescoes with the four Gospels and other symbolic details.

At the end of the visit, accompanied by an as far as the eye can see view over the hills of Stilo, we took the bus back to Mount Stella. Here a short descent enabled us to reach the famous cave where two of us, Marco and Maria Letizia, read some words spoken by Pope Francis during the Youth Synod, which brought us back to the fundamental theme of this little journey, listening.

Aided by the reflection of Fr Alessandro Carioti, we focused on the Holy Father's exhortation to be courageous and enthusiastic witnesses of the Gospel and to put

ourselves in a constructive dialogue with the humility of knowing how to listen and without the fear of talking about God.

Later, before the moment of prayer, we revisited a passage from the Gospel of Luke, in which the Lord reproached the people of his time to be "like children who, sitting in the square, shout to each other like this "We played the flute for you and you did not dance, we sang a lament and you did not cry!"» due to the lack of listening. It is a matter of a tendency to become estranged from reality, sometimes not far from our way of behaving.

At the end of this reflection "The mystery of Monte Stella" took place: the game (with purpose to be discovered) in which, divided into groups, through clues, we had to find five hidden characters among us, each of which delivered to the winning team a sheet with a word. Once we had all five words, there was the purpose of the game: it was necessary to be united and to communicate to get to the final phrase "Together to remind the world of the forgotten word". No winner, no prevalence, only one prize: the union, a noun we find everywhere, in logic, mechanics, politics, mathematics... but which we often forget and leave out its vital importance.

The joy and fraternity that characterized the day reached its peak when we had lunch and joked together in the rooms next to the grotto before participating in the Mass, with which the day ended amid the countless smile faces that surrounded us.

Having returned to our homes around 6:30 pm, I think that each of us did not waste time, but added something to his thinking and the way of seeing and listening to the world and the One who created it.

**Gianluca Nocchi**



## The Word of God came to John

History, from the first day of creation, has been, is and will be put back on the path of true good and justice, only by the Word that comes from the heart of God and becomes life in the heart of a man. As God and Word are one, so the man who receives the Word and the Word are one. If they become two things, it is no longer a Word that transforms history, it lacks in its transforming force which is the life of man in it and of it in man. We know that the perfection of this unity was lived by Lord Jesus. He is the Word of God and the Word of God is He, always, fully, perfectly and completely. In Jesus there have never been empty times, times of distraction, times of subtraction of truth or of life to the Word. He was in the Word. He was the Word. The Word was in Him. The Word was He.

It is useless to hope to bring history back to the path of truth, justice, conversion and true faith in the Gospel, if the Word of God, which is the Word of Christ Jesus, which is Christ Jesus, does not become one with us. There is no distinction between the Word and God. There is no separation between Word and Christ. Not even between the Christian and the Word there must be distinction. What the Word says the Christian says, because it is his life, his blood and his flesh. What the Word reveals the Christian lives, because the Word is his history. History and Word must be one thing. If the Word is not our life, we do not even say it. It's a foreign thing. It does not belong

to our heart and as a consequences not even to our mouth. The mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart. If a heart is without the Word, even its mouth will be without the Word. It will say words of God, will write words of God, but it will not say the Word of God and will not even write it. It is not in its heart. It is not its life. It is not its history.

John the Baptist says of his person that he is the voice of one crying in the desert. He is the true prophet of the living God. He can ask for conversion because He only says the Word of God. He does not draw this Word from the hearts of men and not even from his heart. It is placed directly by God on his lips, even before making it reach his heart. If the Christian wants to be an instrument of God to put history back on its right path, on the path that leads to eternal salvation, he must always ask the Lord to put his Word, his true Word, on his lips. It is a matter of moral and intellectual honesty. No one must give another man his word as the Word of God. It is a very serious sin against the second and the eighth commandments. We utter the name of God in vain, we say false testimony against the Lord our God, deceiving men. We show him a way of life, while it is only of death. Mother of God, in you the eternal Word has become flesh, grant that in us too it is made our heart to be our word of salvation, redemption, justice and peace.

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# The Word is alive and vivifying

## Reflections starting from the Speech of H.H. Francis to a delegation of the American Biblical Society (Rome 31.10.2018)

**B**artimaeus [...] is blind and has no one to listen to him; and when he wanted to talk, they silenced him. Jesus hears his cry. And when he meets him he lets him talk. [...] Jesus is not quick, he gives time to listening. Here is the first step to help the journey of faith: listening. It is the apostolate of the ear: listening, before speaking» (Homily).

The Holy Father, on the occasion of the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on young people, starting from the story of the blind man of Jericho (cf. Mk 11: 46-52), underlined how important "listening" is in the process of faith and salvation.

The ears of Bartimaeus listen to those who speak of Jesus and say his identity: He is the Nazarene, the Son of David. Bartimaeus, thanks to this listening that takes place through ways that we do not know, knows who the one who passes and knows his mission well is. Therefore his faith moves his mouth to translate what he heard in a cry of request for help: "Son of David, have mercy on me!". Bartimaeus does not address this supplication to others, because he knows that these cannot give him but a few coins to continue living in his condition as a blind beggar. The faith of this suffering man knows the truth of the people around him, but he also knows the truth of Christ who is the giver of a new life, which is much more than a penny or an almsgiving. The announced Gospel has this great power of grace: it knows how to give to the listener the right faith that comes from the right knowledge of Christ.

On the other side are the ears of Jesus. These listen to the cry of the blind man of Jericho and do not remain indifferent to it. The cry of Bartimaeus raises the question of Christ:

"What do you want me to do for you?"; the blind man replies: "Rabbi, let me regain my sight!"; listening on the part of Christ is complete and is translated into compassionate fulfilment: "Go, your faith has saved you"; the cry of the heart is appeased and salvation is accomplished: "He immediately saw again and followed him along the road". From the text it emerges that the proclamation of the truth about Christ generates in the hearts light of knowledge, which becomes prayer and desire for freedom from all spiritual slavery and sin. This means that the Church, if she wants man not to seek "alms" to cohabit with the evils he has fallen in, but has the desire to rise again, must offer him the charity of the announcement of the Gospel. In this way she will raise the cry of faith, necessary so that the Son of David has mercy and intervenes with his creative omnipotence.

In this sense, the Church's mission is twofold. On the one hand she must arouse the cry of faith, on the other she must support it. The prophetic mission of the Church is at the beginning of faith, but also on its journey towards the perfect fulfilment of salvation. In fact, it happens that many, as it was for Bartimaeus, try to discourage those who believe in Christ and can induce many to apostasy. Therefore, the Word of God must always be given, in a permanent and wise way.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help Christians so that in evangelical preaching they do not let themselves be overcome by atheistic thought, in the awareness that only the act of faith in the Gospel leads man to the person of Christ, the only Source of salvation.

Father Giuseppe Carrabetta

The  
Lord's Day  
ROMAN RITE

THE WORD OF GOD CAME TO JOHN  
(II SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR C)

### WRAPPED IN THE CLOAK OF JUSTICE FROM GOD (Bar 5.1-9)

Baruch is a prophet who lived the moment when Jerusalem was destroyed and its sons not consumed by the sword, by the plague and by hunger, were brought into slavery to Babylon. First of all, his word explains why the sons of Israel were deported from their land. They have abandoned the path of wisdom that is all in the Word of their God. They have violated his covenant. They worshiped vain idols instead of their Creator and Lord. He tells them that in the crucible of Babylon they will return to their God. The Lord will return to them and slavery will end for them. Then he invites Jerusalem to wrap itself in the mantle of justice that comes from God. Why is God righteous? Because he is faithful to his Word. In conversion he always grants forgiveness and always frees from slavery produced by infidelity. All creation puts itself at the service of God to facilitate the return journey to Zion.

### BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOSPEL (Phil 1.4-6.8-11)

Saint Paul does not want selfish Christians. He does not want disciples who, after having believed in Christ, imprison their faith in their hearts. The Christian is a true disciple of the Lord the moment in which he gives his faith to many other brothers. The same rule given by God for alms is valid for faith. You have little give little. You have a lot give a lot. You have little faith give little faith as you grow in it. You have a lot of faith give a lot of faith while you perfect yourself in it. Sometimes just one Word is enough, even if there is still little faith, to save a life. This is the way of true evangeli-

zation: giving everyone, always the Word of Jesus. While we are giving it, we also pray so that it can be accepted and bring fruits of eternal life to those who believe in it. Nobody has to live the faith for himself. When this happens, his is a dead faith. When faith is alive, it is always given. It is always announced and always communicated.

### A VOICE OF ONE CRYING OUT IN THE DESERT (Lk 3,1-6)

The Lord comes. He comes in every sacrament that is celebrated. His coming must always be prepared. If it is not worthily prepared, his coming is vain. It does not produce any fruit. There are two responsibilities: that of the one who prepares and the other of the one who is called to be prepared to receive the Lord. If he who has to prepare, does not carry out his ministry, he is responsible before God for having made the sacramental coming of grace vain. If instead it is he who has to welcome the Lord who does not let himself be prepared for the encounter with his God, Saviour and Redeemer, he becomes guilty before Him for having wasted the grace of salvation. How is the way prepared? Through the announcement of the true Word of God. A false word generates a false preparation, an erroneous word prepares improperly. Only the true Word of God generates true preparation. What is the true Word of God? It is the one that today comes from the heart of God according to the full truth of the Holy Spirit. Today, the great responsibility in the preparation is the one of the preparers. They often prepare with words not of God.

*by the theologian,*

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