

Notes: True friendship

"**Y**ou are my friends, if you do what I command you. I no longer call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all that I have heard from my Father I have made it known to you" (Jn 15: 14-15).

These are the words that Jesus addresses to his disciples, calling them friends and not servants. They are friends and not servants because Jesus revealed to them what he heard from the Father, that is, the intimate mystery of God and of man. However, to be friends of Jesus it is necessary to respect a condition: living and doing what Jesus commands. Whoever, of his disciples, obeys and puts into practice the Commandments of Jesus, his Gospel, his Laws and his Word, this is his friend.

From what has been said, a first conclusion derives: the disciple who does not obey the Master is not his friend. He will live with the Master a false rapport, a false relationship, made of hypocrisy and empty appearance. He is said to be a disciple of Jesus, but in truth he is his enemy.

Friendship with Jesus and the conditions for realizing it are the model and the basis for every true friendship. Who is the true male or female friend? It is he or she who helps to live the friendship with Jesus, that is

he or she who helps to obey the Word of Jesus, the only Word of eternal life and the only Word of goodness. Consequently every person who, instead of favouring friendship with Jesus, hinders or works to destroy it cannot be considered a true male or female friend. He is not such because he tries to divert the other towards a word, a thought, a fashion, an attitude and a habit that are contrary to the will of the true Friend Jesus, so certainly they are bad and not good things.

Some simple examples of proposals made by an enemy and not by a friend. The invitation to make use of alcohol, drugs or any type of smoke; the tendency not to respect the night and the day, that is, to go out at night to look for the most varied ways of "s-dance" and to sleep during the day, a time when one should work or study; the seduction which wishes to use one's own and others' body in a disordered way, anticipating or not respecting the union that is realized in marriage; fashion that transforms one's body into a "blackboard" on which to write at will. These are temptations to evil and sin, because they are contrary to words and explicit commandments of the Lord: do not kill, so physical health must always be respected and taken care of; man is created in the image of God and, once he is baptized, is the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore his body must be kept in purity (see Gen 1, 27, Ex 20: 13-14; Lv 19, 28, 1 Corinthians 6: 15-20).

In the light of the Word of God, it becomes simple to behave like a male or female friend: if one lives and helps another to live all that conforms to the Gospel of Jesus, then friendship is true. True friendship is built on the Word of the true Friend Jesus, the divine Word guarded by His Church founded on Peter.

Father Remo Fiorentino

Where is he who was born, the king of the Jews?

Christ Jesus, Creator, Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, Grace, Truth, Eternal Life and Revealing person of the Father in the Holy Spirit, is the Gift made by God to every man. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him does not get lost, but has eternal life. If Christ is the Gift of God to the world, that is to every people, nation and language, it is the right of every man to receive this Gift. He can be denied to no one either for religious reasons, or for political reasons or of any other nature. Even theology must put itself at the service of this right and never for its destruction. Even Jesus has placed himself at the service of this right, he let himself be given as a gift until death on the cross. He has commanded his Apostles to respect this right, rather he has ordered them to consume themselves so that every man may have what is his by the eternal will of the Father, who loves man of eternal love.

"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Mt 28: 18-20). Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and will be baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mk 16: 15-16). And in his name conversion and forgiveness of sins will be preached to all peoples, beginning with Jerusalem. You are witnesses of this (Lk 24: 47-48). Today even

the Virgin Mary took to the field for this right to be respected. She asks that the Word of her Son, forgotten by the world, be remembered. Hence the explicit command of Lord Jesus: Go. Save. Convert. The evangelizing mission obliges every disciple of Jesus so that no man, of any nation and of any people is deprived of this essential right, the first right of man: that of knowing Jesus to enter into the fullness of eternal life.

Today God respects this human right - even God is obliged to respect by righteousness every promise made to man. Even for him every promise is a duty of justice - sending a star to warn the Magi that the promised King was born. The Magi set off and with the help of the Scriptures, they arrive to the place where the Born King was. They lend their worship by offering him gold, incense and myrrh. Who is Jesus for the Magi? Their King, their God, the King and the God who would have been seized by a great, unspeakable suffering. But it is precisely for this unspeakable suffering that He works salvation. Redemptive suffering is a duty of Christ, but it is also a human right to be saved. It also applies to the body of Christ. Even the body of Christ is obliged to respect the right of humanity. It must let itself be given by God for the salvation of the world. Mother of the Redemption, you have observed this right. Ensure that we also respect it for all the days of our life. From the respect of this right is our eternal life and that of many of our brothers.

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Movimento Apostolico

Non-profit Apostolic Movement Weekly.
Free distribution. Publisher: Apostolic Movement
Responsible Director: Costantino Di Bruno.

With ecclesiastical approval of the
Archbishopric Curia of Catanzaro-Squillace.

Authorization no. 75 of 8-2-1990 of the Court of Lamezia Terme.
Directorate, Editorial, Administration: Via B.Musolino, 23/E, Catanzaro.

Internet: www.movimentoapostolico.it
e-mail: info@movimentoapostolico.it

Printed by the press office of the Apostolic Movement

BEING FOUNDED, GROWING, MATURING

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SPEECH OF H.H. FRANCIS TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF JESUS IN ROME (3.12.2018)

Last December 3, at the Vatican Pope Francis met the Community of the College of Jesus in Rome, which welcomes Jesuits in formation, coming from all over the world. From the beginning of his pontificate, he has been on several occasions with the members of his own order, deepening particular aspects of the spirituality given by St. Ignatius of Loyola to his clerics and to the whole Church. In this circumstance, his speech was centred on three verbs, called to guide the Jesuit journey, but equally referable to that of every Christian.

The first of these is being founded. Pope Francis reminded those present of the special grace granted to them during their stay in Rome, that of living in the "house where St. Ignatius lived, wrote the Constitutions and sent the first companions on a mission to the world" and in the heart-city of the Church, as the seat of the Vicar of Christ. The "being founded" here takes on a double value, both particular and universal. In fact, it is being rooted in one's own spirituality, in the history of one's own order, in one's own particular ecclesial identity, as in the life and faith of the Church, founded on Peter.

This double rooting allows us to grow, sinking roots more and more: "The plant grows from the roots, which are not seen but support the whole. And it stops giving fruit not when it has few branches, but when the roots are dry. Having roots is having a well-implanted heart, which in God is able to dilate [...] The heart, if it does not dilate, is atrophied. Do not forget this. If we do not grow, we will wither." It is interesting to grasp the reversal of perspective

operated by the Holy Father. Usually, we talk about growth as a process of elevation. Pope Francis here insists instead on how there is no true upward growth that is not above all downward growth, an ever deeper rootedness in the foundation, the Gospel. Therefore, a growth that is a tension towards evangelical radicalism; "a constant acting against one's ego", to overcome the temptation of spiritual worldliness.

What is well founded and grows can finally also mature. Apparently growth and maturation are synonyms. However, in the sense the Holy Father uses them, they indicate two different movements; or rather, the two dimensions - internal and external - of a single movement. In fact, if growth is the constant expansion of roots - which remain invisible - in the foundation, maturation is the visible fruit of this expansion. Thus, inner expansion becomes external expansion, transforming itself into a mission of proclaiming the Word and in tension of love towards the brothers, with the end of touching "the flesh that the Word has taken: caressing the suffering members of Christ, increases familiarity with the incarnated Word».

The indications of the Holy Father for those who have embraced the Jesuitical charisma are valid for every Christian and, especially, for those who live in a particular spirituality. For the adherents of the Apostolic Movement they become an exhortation to increasingly base themselves in their spirituality and in the Church, to grow in an increasingly radically evangelical life, to mature, announcing and reminding each person of the forgotten Word.

Father Davide Marino

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

WHERE IS THE NEWBORN KING OF THE JEWS?
(EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - YEAR C)

BEARING GOLD AND FRANKINCENSE
(Is, 60.1-6)

While Jerusalem is a destroyed, dejected and burned city and its temple devastated, unclothed and stripped, the prophet Isaiah sees the future glory of the city. Peoples will come to it, they will not come for it, but because the Lord lives in it. They will come because they have recognized God as their king and as their sovereign. Gold and incense are signs of royalty and divinity. This prophecy must be applied to the Church, which is the City of the living God, the house of the Lord of hosts. Why must one come to the Church? Certainly not for men. Not even for his fine doctrine, his morality or theology or anthropology or anything like that. Peoples must pour into because they have recognized Christ Jesus as their God and Lord. They want to pay the homage of their adoration. Who in the Church must show Christ Jesus is every single disciple. How is Christ shown? Living in the manner of Christ, consecrating life to him.

FORMING THE SAME BODY
(Eph 2.3a.5-6)

Saint Paul knows that every promise, prophecy, oracle, oath and word of salvation given by God to the Fathers, starting with the first word spoken to the serpent at the beginning of our history, is for all peoples, all races and not only for the children of Abraham. With Jesus every promise of the Father has become history and reality of our present life. In Christ every man, without any difference, is called to participate to all the goods of salvation. Not only there is no difference, even the way is the same for everyone. All must pass through faith in Christ Jesus and all must become one body in

Christ. Everything is accomplished and takes place in the body of Christ. Having the Father revealed this mystery, having been the mystery accomplished, it is right that it is announced to every man. No one will have to be excluded. Everyone will have to know it. Making it known is an obligation of justice. If the mystery is kept silent, we are guilty of serious omission to man.

THEY OFFERED HIM GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH
(Mt 2: 1-12)

Every man has the right to know Christ Jesus. Every disciple of Christ Jesus by command of his Master and Lord has the duty, the obligation to make him known to every other man. Being it a right given to him by God and being a duty given by God and by Christ Jesus, if the disciple of the Lord does not make Christ be known to his brothers, he commits a very serious sin of omission. He has deprived his brothers of true salvation, both that which takes place in time and also that which is accomplished in eternity. Today it is easy to condemn a man to death and eternal perdition. It is enough to deny him the right he has to know Jesus the Lord. God respects this right by preparing history and giving birth to his Messiah, Redeemer and Saviour. He respects the right by sending the star to the Magi. The Magi go to meet their Saviour and God. They find Him in Bethlehem. They adore him, confessing him their King, their God, seeing him, in the Holy Spirit, as the man of great suffering and the man of sorrows. Even the suffering of the Messiah is a right to be given to man for his salvation. It is the mystery.

by the theologian,
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