

Notes - THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

"Remote preparation" for the sacrament: the formation of consciences

The nourishment of conscience is the revealed truth, the faith of the Church and the Gospel of salvation. In other words it is that sound doctrine that separates light and darkness, falsity and truth, justice and injustice, good and evil with precision and with a clean cut.

As an inadequately fed body weakens, becomes ill and eventually dies, so does the conscience that is not constantly illuminated and continually nourished, lose its splendour and little by little its light fades. The reading of good and evil first becomes difficult, then it disappears altogether. Finally, continuing in the non-illumination, it arrives to the point of letting itself be governed by the anti-law of the good that is amorality.

Amorality is the death of a conscience. With it in the heart man is morally ungovernable, concupiscence has the upper hand over him, pride enslaves him and everything he does, he justifies it in the name of a supposed freedom. Amorality is the source of the pollution of existence, the principle of chaos and of ethical disorder, the foundation of unfair and perverse actions, which are inevitable, which will always be accomplished, since it is proper of a man with his own conscience obscured, repetitiveness of obscene, immoral, nefari-

ous and ungodly acts. This is why Jesus, in the Gospel according to Luke, admonishes every one of his disciples, exhorting him to take care of the state of health of his conscience: "Be careful then that the light that is in you is not darkness" (Lk 11:35).

When the conscience becomes obscured, it cannot be rebuilt or recreated, nor formed and revitalized in a day. We need a journey of long years, of a lot of patience, of strong attention, but above all of an already formed model conscience, adult in truth, abiding in total and complete rectitude. No unformed conscience can help another to be formed, to regain its ability to read good and moral evil according to God.

Forming righteous consciences is the first and most urgent task of the Church. In particular, this task and this responsibility fall on the priest, by virtue of the sacred ordination received, which conforms him ontologically to Christ, Shepherd and Master. Therefore, in the People of God, every faithful person has a grave duty to seek a continuous confrontation with the priest, moved by the living desire of nourishing, vivifying and forming his conscience.

This is essential to the correct celebration of the sacrament of confession. In fact, with an unformed conscience, governed by a false judgment, one might also approach the sacrament, but without real repentance and above all without a determined and firm will to begin again to be formed in the moral law. Instead, a formed conscience might read all the evil that dwells in his flesh and in his soul and might desire the forgiveness of the Almighty, by invoking his mercy.

No resurrection is possible, no rebirth is hoped, without the formation of the conscience of the individual and of the whole community.

Father Davide Riggio

You have already received your consolation

The Gospel must always be read according to the truth that the Holy Spirit has placed in every Word contained in it. There are Words that ask obedience to every disciple of Jesus and Words that oblige people in their particular historical condition in which they live. Since the historical conditions are different, the obligation is also different. However, a principle remains unchanged and asks everyone for obedience without any exception or dispensation: every Commandment of the Lord must be lived with full obedience, because for it life is given today and forever and ever. The relationship between man and man is always a fruit of obedience, but it is the divine, eternal principle that makes obedience compulsory for the purpose of salvation.

Two men each live their own particular historical condition. One of them is rich, he dresses in purple and luxurious clothes, he eats lavishly and lives his life in prison in his egoism. The other is very poor, full of sores. He also has a name. His name is Lazarus. The rich has the command to give to the poor what exceeds him. God has given to him in abundance so that in turn he gives abundantly to his neediest brothers. He transgresses this command. He ends up in eternal fire. He did not obey the law of his God. He will not be accepted in his eternal dwellings. It is not the wealth that will condemn him for eternity, but the disobedience to an order given to him from Above. Lazarus also has one, rather two Commandments to observe: do not steal and do not desire the things of others. In fact, he does not desire the rich man's food. He asks that he be reco-

gnized as a dog and be allowed to feed on the leftovers that fall from the rich man's table. Since he observes the two Commandments of his God, in patience, in righteousness and in holiness, without ever deviating from the holy Law, he is received into the eternal kingdom and placed next to Abraham. He is not saved because he is poor, but because he is faithful to the law of the Lord.

The Gospel is not a class struggle, nor is it a rule of right sociality. On the contrary, the Gospel is the law of eternal life, redemption, salvation and justification before God and men. You, poor, do you want to be saved? Observe the law of your poverty. Stay faithful to every commandment of your God, without deviating either to the right or to the left. Your God will send the dogs to lick your sores. You, rich, do you want to enter the hall of the eternal banquet? Observe the law of your Lord, also. Break the bread with the hungry and dress those who are naked and cure who is in suffering. If you do this, the Lord will bless your wealth and will make his providence of you. You will be a true operator of mercy and your God will make you sit beside him for eternity. In the Gospel there is no struggle among the social parts, there is no war, there is no hate, there is no protest, there is no strike and there is no revolution. The Gospel is obedience to the Law of the Lord in every condition of life. Everyone must observe his Commandment to have eternal life. Mother of the Redemption, help every disciple of Christ, so that he may live his historical condition in full obedience to the Law of the Lord.

Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno

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.Musulino, 23/E, Catanzaro.

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

Printed by the press office of the Apostolic Movement

THE PRAYER OF OUR FATHER

Reflections starting from the Catechesis on Our Father of H.H. Francis (Rome 12.12.2018)

In one of his Catecheses, Pope Francis affirmed that "Our Father" is a "short and audacious prayer because, if Christ had not suggested it, probably none of us - indeed, none of the most famous theologians - would dare to pray God in this way" (Catechesis). Its seven questions - the number which indicates fullness - are transformed into the heart of the believer in a confiding and trusting invocation in its fulfilment, as stated especially in the Gospel according to Luke.

In the history of the Church there are many saints who have had this experience and then left in their writings the testimony of their relationship with God. Just think of a saint of our times, St. Pius of Pietrelcina, who thus said: "The prayer is the best weapon we have; it is a key that opens the heart of God. You must speak to Jesus with the heart as well, other than with the lip; indeed, in certain contingencies, you must speak to him only with the heart".

Our Father is a powerful prayer that Jesus taught us and it must be recited "with all simplicity, as children turn to their father. And this word "Father" expresses confidence and filial trust" (Catechesis.) Just as children with simplicity and trust ask everything to their father, so the Christian in every suffering and every anxiety, must raise his / her question to the Father in the form of a prayer for the daily needs. Even if fitting, the example does not become true if our faith is lacking. Pope Francis says: "We should all be like the Bartimaeus of the Gospel (cf. Mk 10.46-52) - let us remember that passage of the Gospel, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus - the blind man who was begging at Jericho's doors. He had so many

good people around him that commanded him to be silent: "But shut up! The Master is passing. Do not disturb. The Master has so much to do, do not disturb him. You are annoying with your shouts. Do not disturb." But he did not listen to those advices: with a holy insistence, he demanded that his miserable condition could finally meet Jesus. And he shouted louder! And the polite people: "No, it's the Master, please! You'll make a bad impression!"

And he cried out because he wanted to see, he wanted to be healed: "Jesus, have mercy on me!" (v. 47). Jesus gives him back his sight, and tells him: "Your faith has saved you" (verse 52), almost as if to explain that the decisive thing for his recovery was that prayer, that invocation shouted with faith, stronger than the "common sense" of so many people who wanted to silence him. Not only does the prayer precede salvation, but somehow it already contains it, because it frees from the desperation of those who do not believe in a way out of so many unbearable situations" (Catechesis).

Faith rewards Bartimaeus. It is Jesus himself who says it: "your faith has saved you". So let us ask ourselves what is faith? How much do we believe in God as a Father? How much do we believe in his omnipotence? How much do we place our trust in Him? From the personal answer to these questions we too will find the strength and the determination to cry out to God, Our Father, every day in prayer our need for help and He will grant us.

May the Virgin Mary, who has been able to translate into a Canticle of Praise the thanksgiving for the wonders God has worked in her, be our example.

Father Vincenzo Moniaci

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

YOUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT IN HEAVEN
(VI Sunday O.T. - Year C)

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD (Jer 17,5-8)

Today, the prophet Jeremiah shouts to us two truths. He who trusts in the Lord walks from blessing to benediction until the attainment of eternal blessing. Instead, whoever trusts in man is deprived of the blessing of God and proceeds in the curse to the eternal curse. He trust in the Lord whoever obeys his holy law, his Commandments and every statute given by him to man as the true law of life. If God is separated from his Word revealed and handed over to the people, one no longer confides in the Lord. His law is not our obedience. He confide in men who relies on his word. The word of man is not of life, but of death. The woman leaned on the word of the snake and she ended in death. The man confided in the woman's word, he too entered death. They did not trust in the Word of their God and they found themselves in death, in separation, in disobedience and in sin.

THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP (1Cor 15, 17.20-26)

Risen Jesus is the first fruit of those who died. The first fruits of Ancient Scripture belonged to the Lord. An offering of it had to be made to Him. Jesus is the first fruit that matures on the tree of obedience to God. With obedience to his Word, other fruits of glorious resurrection will also follow, today as spiritual resurrection, regeneration, birth from on high, tomorrow, at the end of the world the glorious resurrection of bodies will also follow. But for whom will the resurrection with a glorious, spiritual, incorruptible and immortal body, in all similar to the body of Christ Jesus, be? This

resurrection is reserved only for those who have done good in their lives. For the disciple of Jesus, good is only obedience to the Gospel, to the Word of salvation. Obeying the Gospel, we too will be transformed into first fruits for our God, in Christ, with Christ and for Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Immortal and eternal truth.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS YOURS (Lk 6, 17.20-26)

Every Word of Jesus must be read in the Holy Spirit and it must be understood in Him, with Him and in his wisdom, intelligence, truth and science. But this is not yet sufficient. The understood truth must be lived and it can only be lived with his fortitude. Poverty is the true way of salvation. When is it the way of salvation? When it is lived according to the Gospel, in the Gospel and in obedience to the Word of Jesus. If one comes out of the Word of Jesus and obedience to it, poverty is no longer the way of eternal life, because it is not preserved in the Gospel of salvation. But also wealth is the way of eternal life, on the same condition: that it is lived according to the Word of Jesus, the only way of redemption. How is riches according to the Gospel lived? Making it an instrument of the providence of the Father, sharing the goods received from God with those who are without them. Sharing is not in function of the poor who is in need, but only to obey an eternal law established by God. The Lord gives to the rich so that the rich gives to the poor. If he does not give, he disobeys and is damned.

by the theologian,
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno