

Milan: volunteer experiences among the elderly

"How many times are the elderly discarded with attitudes of abandonment that are a real hidden euthanasia! It is the effect of that culture of waste that hurts our world a lot. Children are discarded, young people are discarded, because they have no job, the elderly are discarded with the pretension of maintaining a balanced economic system, at the centre of which there is no human person, but money. We are called to counteract this poisonous culture of waste!" (Pope Francis, meeting with the elderly in St. Peter's Square, 28 September 2014). These words are a real call not to abandon the elderly, a call to show special attention and care towards those who are more fragile.

We adherents of the Apostolic Movement fully welcome this invitation of the Pope who urges us to rediscover the elderly as "trees that continue to bear fruit", "an essential part of the Christian community and society" because they represent "the roots and memory of a people".

Fr. Carlo Pirotta, ecclesiastical assistant of the Apostolic Movement in the diocese of Milan, at the beginning of this pastoral year invited us to offer our service every third Sunday of the month at the retirement home, Father Masciadri in Seveso (MB), where the Charitable Nurse Sisters of St. Charles lent their benevolent assistance. Mother Anna, their superior, after the proposal of Fr Carlo welcomed us with great joy, and from Octo-

ber 2018 a small group of young people and adults offers the service of animation of the Sacred Mass. The reception of the sisters who run this retirement home is truly precious for each of us, as they become witnesses to the love and tenderness of Jesus, always showing to be well disposed towards us.

Our service is not limited only to the animation of the Mass, but we also try to give a hand to the staff accompanying them with the elderly to church before Mass and into the rooms immediately after the celebration. During these brief moments with them we socialise exchanging simple words, being interested about their state of health or just giving a smile, thus noting their need and desire to open up, tell us about them, talking of their daily life.

The inspirer-founder of the Apostolic Movement, Mrs. Maria Marino has urged us many times not to leave the elderly alone, inviting us to keep them company and praying with them. Taking advantage of these words we have noticed how the attention with which we address these "grannies" is very precious and is not obvious, because for them it represents a significant moment for the consideration they get. It is a feeling of being loved and appreciated just as the Pope reminds us: "To hear someone say thank you for being here, to see some faces smile, fills our hearts with joy and helps us to persevere in our commitment with so much love". The presence of some young people and the intercourse among them strengthens this union of wisdom and freshness, allowing to welcome the words of the Pope who speaks of every age as "a gift of God".

We are convinced that it is precisely the guests of the retirement home who donate something to us and that is why our little time given to them is transformed into a service.

Adriana Belviso, Sara Cappiello, Maria Corea

This is my Son, the chosen one; listen to him!

The Father of Heaven invites the disciples to listen to Christ Jesus. He is his eternal Word of truth, justice, love, charity, hope and salvation. He does not recognize any other word as true except that of his Son, of his Beloved. If Jesus is the only true Word of the Father, then we must confess that today there is something that clashes in our faith. There are two truths that govern believers in Christ today. On the one hand there is the Gospel, there is the whole New Testament, there is the whole Sacred Scripture that say one thing and then there are the Christians who say other things. Since they are not complementary, but contrary, opposite "truths", then if one is true, the other is false. For one to be true, the other must necessarily be false. If only Christ Jesus is to be heard, others must not be heard. If others are listened to, Christ Jesus cannot be heard. The two words are in contrast, opposition and negation.

If salvation comes from faith and by faith we mean full obedience to the Word of Jesus, according to the truth placed in it by the Holy Spirit, then it is false to say that we are all safe and all will eventually be in the eternal kingdom of God. If Christ Jesus is the only name given to men in whom it is established that we can be saved; the other word that says that every man is the way of salvation seems to be in sharp contrast. If baptism is necessary to enter the kingdom of God, all modern theories are false, according to which there is no difference between the baptized and the non-baptized. If the acceptance of the Gospel and consequently its

preaching is obligatory to be saved, it becomes impossible to affirm that there is no need to preach the Gospel or to be converted to it. Salvation is given regardless of adherence to the Gospel and also from its preaching. The same applies to the Eucharist. It is been insinuating among Christians that there is no need to be in apostolic succession to be able to celebrate it and of in no baptism to receive it. Not only that, but also you can receive it independently from your spiritual state. Grace and sin are irrelevant.

The true Christian is the one who remains faithful in listening to Christ Jesus, lending everlasting obedience to this voice that the Father has made reverberating on the mountain. Today, unfortunately, we have fallen into the temptation of reducing Christianity, from religion of the transcendent, of the divine and of the eternal, to the religion of the immanent, of the earth, of the fleeting, of the momentary, and also of instinct, of feeling and of sin. The Word of God has been replaced with the word of man. Having made this substantial change, it must no longer be any wonder if everything has by now become indistinct, indeterminate and indifferent. Yet Christ Jesus is the Divine and human Different, because He is the Different One who is the Incarnate God, the Crucified God, the Immolated God, the Risen God, the Saviour God, the Lord God and the God Judge of the living and the dead in his humanity. Mother of God, arrange that every disciple of Jesus listens only to the Word of the Crucified and Risen God.

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PASSIONATE CUSTODIANS OF HUMAN LIFE

Reflections starting from the speech of H.H. Francis to the Board of Directors of the Movement for Life (2.2.2019)

Life is from God and of God. It is sacred and nobody is allowed to dispose of it at will. It is a true miracle, a prodigy that takes place before our eyes and which, although it requires, in its generation, the collaboration of man and woman, it is never just something that depends on them. Indeed, at the moment of conception God himself intervenes and creates, with his omnipotence, the immortal soul which is spiritual and not material.

We all have "the absolute duty to defend life, from its conception until its natural extinction" (Speech), engaging all the forces necessary to foster the collaboration of the different components of society. Not only the Church, also the family, the School, Politics, Science in all its branches and every Christian wherever he lives, suffers and hopes, must guard and love life and the human person, who is its privileged depository: "Defence of life is not accomplished in one way or with a single gesture, but is realized in a multiplicity of actions, attentions and initiatives; nor does it concern only some people or certain professional fields, but it involves every citizen and the complex interweaving of social relations" (Speech).

The custody of life is a true vocation for everybody. The Lord asks everyone to tune in with his will and become a docile instrument in his hands, so that every human life can realize the purpose for which it was created. Manipulating life is a grave sin that cries out against Heaven, because it is a true act of idolatry. It is to arbitrarily deny the lordship of God over all flesh and deliberately ignore his eternal wisdom in the name of foolish and diabo-

lical philosophies.

Life is not a consumer good and the human person is not a laboratory product. Life is a very high mystery to be worshipped, a gift to be welcomed and served in perfect humility: "In any case, turning off life in its blossoming is a betrayal of our vocation, other than the pact that binds generations together; a pact that allows to look forward with hope. Where there is life there is hope! But if life itself is violated in its arising, what remains is no longer the grateful and amazed reception of the gift, but a cold calculation of what we have and what we can dispose of. Then life is also reduced to a consumer good, to be used and thrown away, for ourselves and for others. How dramatic this vision is, unfortunately widespread and rooted, also presented as a human right, and how much suffering does it cause to the weakest of our brothers!" (Speech).

The guardianship of life begins with the purification of the heart from self-determination, that is from the latent idolatry which today encompasses many men and women of every social condition. In fact, only if we re-establish the supernatural principle of morality - which is the will of God manifested to us in fullness in Christ the Lord - can we ensure that man respects the other man, serves him in holiness and justice and helps him to know, love and serve our Lord. Having faith died in him, morality dies and humanity falls into the abyss of spiritual and physical death.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, make us custodians of life in the faith of her divine Son Jesus.

Father Raffaele Rimotti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

A CLOUD CAME AND CAST A SHADOW OVER THEM
(II SUNDAY OF LENT - Year C)

CREDITED IT TO HIM AS AN ACT OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS (Gen 15,5-12.17-18)

When we believe in the Word of the Lord, our God is obliged by righteousness to do what he has promised. If he did not give what he promised he would be unjust. But he would also be unjust if he gave without any faith on the part of man what he promised for obedience to his Word. Today our faith is without any truth. In fact, when it is said and taught that Paradise is for everyone, while God has said that it is for those who believe in his Word and obey his every command, we declare non-other that God is unjust. He makes no distinction between the executioner and the martyr, between those who believed and those who refused to believe, among those who commit themselves every day to obey his Word and those who deliberately transgress it. What we say is not worthy of our God. We also declare all the revelation that is this eternal distinction and separation between good and evil, justice and injustice, false.

IN THIS WAY STAND FIRM IN THE LORD
(Phil 3,17-4,3)

When we have chosen to walk behind Christ Jesus, according to the Gospel announced by the Apostle of the Lord, to remain steadfast, anchored to the truth of faith, which is the Crucified and the Risen, running to conform to Him, is an obligation. Salvation is given by obedience to the truth, to the Word and to the Gospel. But this is not yet sufficient. Those who announce the Word are called to show how the Word must be lived in every moment of life. What did Christ Jesus, the Master and the Lord do? He first gave his Law on the mountain. Then he went down among the men and showed his

Apostles how He gave fulfilment to every proclaimed Word. If the one who announces the Word does not also show how it must be lived, he creates a rift between announcement and life. With his non-life according to the Word he teaches the world that faith is only a cognitive act and nothing more. Instead, with faith, the Word is transformed into life.

HIS CLOTHING BECAME DAZZLING
WHITE (Lk 9: 28b-36)

On Mount Jesus shows his disciples his divinity. This hides the flesh for a moment and the Master appears in his eternal glory. He is of a divine nature other than of human nature. He is true God other than true man. He is the true God in true man and is the true man in the true God, according to the dogmatic definition of the hypostatic union. Moses and Elijah are the witness of the Law and the Prophets. They are with Christ the Lord, in fact they speak of the next outcome that would have been accomplished in Jerusalem. Even the Father of heaven is with Jesus. His voice, which reverberates like thunder, invites the three disciples to listen to their Master, who is his beloved Son. Jesus is God. He is the Son of the Father. He is the Son of David. He is the Messiah. He is the Crucifix and He is the Risen One. All the prophecies are fulfilled in him. He is the Saviour of the world. Peter wishes he could stop this moment and make it eternal. But there are no eternal moments on earth. There is only one path that must lead to crucifixion in order to be clothed with the glory of the resurrection. It is the journey of Christ and of the Christian.

by the theologian,
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