

ROME: DIOCESAN MEETING OF THE APOSTOLIC

"It is nicer together," reads the song with which the extraordinary meeting of the adherents of the Apostolic Movement of the Diocese of Rome opened, held last March 2 at the Saint Roman Martyr parish and which was added to the usual meetings of catechesis and in-depth study of the charisma. It was indeed a true joy, as Fr Davide Marino underlined, to find ourselves all together, beyond the territorial difficulties and distances, and to recognize ourselves as part of a single body, of a single Movement and of a single family.

This mission, Fr. Edoardo Palma said, must be carried out promptly, to follow up the appeal of the Virgin Mary, always keeping in mind the purpose of bringing joy back to the heart of those who lost it, as the text of the chant "And I wish I could tell you" by Fr. Franco Bruno.

The Apostolic Movement, with its work of remembrance and proclamation of the Gospel, wants, together with the whole Church, to give hope to those who have lost it in the journey of life.

Fr Flavio Placida, in stressing how prayer is one of the cornerstones of our spirituality, urged all members to live in

the Church, with the Church and for the Church, together with priests, in the certainty that the Lord is always by our side, as witnessed by our founder Maria Marino.

Permeated by an atmosphere of intense spirituality, the meeting was organized thanks to the contribution of all the members belonging to the different parish realities of the Diocese and of the lay consecrated women. After a short welcome, animated by the performance of some songs, the deepening of the charisma of the Apostolic Movement followed, starting from the reading of the Word of God by the priests present. Then, we started to prayer alternating the recitation the Holy Rosary to that of some Psalms. The hints for reflection were offered by a letter from St. Paul the Apostle, a prayer of the Holy Father Francis and one of Saint Theresa of Calcutta and had as a guiding motive the awareness that living the word of God and being faithful to it makes us part of His people, of the Church and of the Apostolic Movement.

The meeting ended with the blessing of Fr Flavio Placida, who thanked the Lord for our presence, our joy, our commitment and for what we are and will do in the Apostolic Movement and in the Church.

Let us pray to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, so that together we take to heart this work that we already love so much, imitating our founder in perseverance and in love for Jesus.

Francesca Petrillo
Diocesan Secretary



He fell on his neck and kissed him

Every child of God is called to think with the thoughts of God, to want with the will of God, to love with the heart of God, to act always imitating his actions that are of salvation, redemption, justification, forgiveness, conversion and sanctification, in truth and in charity. Neither truth without charity and neither charity without truth. Neither justice without mercy nor mercy without justice. Neither fidelity without right nor right without fidelity. In the times of Jesus, Pharisees and scribes had divided the world into two categories: saints and sinners. The saint always remained holy, even if he committed monstrous crimes and led a life without obedience to the Law of the Lord. The sinner was a sinner and he had to remain such forever. For him there was neither conversion, nor salvation and nor welcome.

God has not divided the world into righteous and sinners. He does not take care of saints and abandons sinners. He comes down into our history to call sinners to penitence, conversion, so that they return to the house of his law and his will. The Lord has always worked for the conversion of those who have separated from Him. Thus the Psalm: "From the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, listen to my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If you consider the faults, Lord, Lord, who can resist you? But forgiveness is with you: thus we will have your fear" (Ps 130 (129) 1-4). The younger son leaves the Father's house. He scatters all his belongings. He is in hunger. Nobody takes pity on him. He repents of what he has done. He decides to re-

turn to the Father, not to be accepted as a child, but at least as one of his salaried workers. He knows that the Father has respect for those who work for him and no one is deprived of his justice by him.

The son has come out from the heart of the Father, never has the Father taken the child from his heart. This small detail of the parable reveals it. His father was not busy with his work. He was intent on looking at the horizon to see his son as soon as had reached the sight of his eyes. In this particular is enclosed all the great love of the Father towards his son: "When he was still far away, his father saw him, he had compassion, ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him. Soon, bring here the most beautiful dress and make him wear it, put the ring on his finger and the sandals on his feet. Take the fat calf, kill it, let us eat and party, because this my son was dead and he came back to life, he was lost and was found again". The hatred and contempt of the brother who denies him as his brother, is opposed to this great love. This son of his does not care anything about the return of his brother; he does not embrace him and does not even deem him worth of a greeting. He went out of the house and must never again put feet in it. This is the saddest fruit of sin: the unwillingness to have mercy with those who have made or are making mistakes. Instead, Jesus died on the cross to obtain the forgiveness of all the lost sons of the Father. Mother of God, do not let our heart close to love and mercy.

Msr. 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.Musolino, 23/E, Catanzaro.

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Printed by the press office of the Apostolic Movement

BLESSEDNESS AND DAILY LIFE HOLINESS

*Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis
in the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi - 5.2.2019)*

In the homily given during Holy Mass in the Zayed Sports City in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis invited people present to firmly believe that if the Beatitudes become the incarnation of the sentiments of Jesus, they generate "a joy that gives peace even in pain, that already makes us anticipate the everlasting happiness that awaits us».

They are the paradox of existence, because they overturn the thoughts of those who want to persuade many to reach an earthly happiness, through wealth, power, success, acclamation, injustice, violence and the pleasures of this world.

Instead, for Jesus, those who keep a poor, gentle soul are always blessed, always remaining righteous "even at the cost of making a bad impression". Living the Beatitudes means living the same love of Christ, who teaches us that "he is not great who possess, but he who gives".

The Pope's invitation is to ensure that the Gospel does not remain only one written on paper, but pervades the feelings of the Christian and becomes a "writing" in the life of each one. This passage has been deepened with a singular example: "It is said that between the written Gospel and the lived Gospel there is the same difference that exists between written and played music". The world is waiting to read this "living Gospel" through the authentic witness of those who have given that, total and joyful "yes", to Christ. A "reading" that is able to attract men to the faith, to the values of the Gospel and, with the power of the Spirit, to promote the unity of faith and communion.

In the present context, in which there is a "variety of nations, languages and rituals",

the Holy Spirit is the only one capable of attracting men to God and of harmonizing the gifts and differences in a single "joyful polyphony of faith [...] that builds the Church".

Living the Beatitudes is not easy, because one cannot live in the illusion of being always cheerful: "Whoever is afflicted, who suffers injustice, who strives to be an operator of peace knows what it means to suffer". Cultural contexts and human situations often make these difficulties be felt. But a certainty reassures us and it is Christ's promise, the one of his always being with us: "I will be with you every day".

This is why we must never fall into discouragement or, worse, into the temptation of wanting to do at all costs something impressive to be pleasing to God. This is not what the Lord asks of us, because "living the Beatitudes does not require extraordinary gestures" and Jesus "did not ask to raise great works or being signalled by performing extraordinary deeds". What he asks of us is "to realize a single work of art, possible for all: that of our life". In fact, the Beatitudes are similar to a "map of life" able to show us the way to "keep the heart clean" and to conform every thought, every decision and every daily choice, to the thoughts and life of Jesus. Living the Beatitudes allows us to build that "daily life holiness", which supports us in facing the challenges and trials of every day and thus making the world more beautiful.

May the Mother of the Redemption bless those who wish to become "the living Gospel" in the world and attract many hearts to Christ and to his Gospel of truth.

Father Alessandro Carioti

The Lord's Day **SENT HIM TO HIS FARM TO TEND THE SWINE**
ROMAN RITE **(IV SUNDAY OF LENT - Year C)**

NO LONGER WAS THERE MANNA FOR THE ISRAELITES (Gs 5,9a.10-12)

Manna is the food of the desert. It no longer falls from the sky, when the children of Israel enter the promised land, where milk and honey flow, so great is the abundance promised by the Lord. If the manna does not fall, the divine blessing must always fall in the promised land. It will fall if the children of Israel obey the Word of their God and Lord. While in the desert the manna also fell in disobedience and in murmuring, in the promised land the blessing falls in obedience. One disobeys, the earth becomes a desert, a desolation, but without any manna falling from the sky. Now is the time of the great responsibility of every child of Israel. Everyone is called to be a blessing for every other brother. Only one falls into disobedience and many others could be dragged. Everyone in the land must be a model of obedience and great fidelity.

BE RECONCILED TO GOD (2Cor 5,17-21)

Christ Jesus operated the reconciliation of humanity with his Creator, Lord, God and Father. Not only must this great mystery be announced, every man must be invited, exhorted and implored to be reconciled with God, in Christ Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit, through the mediation of the apostle of the Lord, who received from Christ Jesus the mandate not only to preach the Gospel, but also to baptize and forgive sins. Saint Paul is a model in the exercise of the apostolic ministry. He travels far and wide the territory of the pagans, inviting every man to let himself be

reconciled with God in Christ Jesus. Whoever accepts his invitation, reconciles himself to God, enters the mystery of salvation. Instead, who chooses not to be reconciled remains in sin. He assumes all his eternal responsibility before the Lord. Instead, if it is the apostle who does not invite to reconciliation in Christ, he is responsible for the death of his brothers.

I SHALL GET UP AND GO TO MY FATHER (Lk 15,1-3.11-31)

Salvation is the fruit of two wills. Of the will of the Father who gives every grace in Christ and in his Holy Spirit so that man may be converted and live. But also of the will of the man who accepts the grace of God and takes the way back to the house of the Father. The ways through which the Lord gives his grace are infinite, mysterious and unimaginable. For the younger son who leaves for a distant country, the Lord uses the extreme misery in which he falls and also the contempt the world has for him. It does not even consider him the same as those pigs that he must feed and keep. The pigs have carobs in abundance. He is not even allowed to take a swine carob and feed on it. From this spiritual and material desolation in which he finds himself, true grace of God, he decides to return to his father; he does not even pretend to be treated as a son, but at least as an apprentice and a salaried among the employees. But the son is always a son for the father. This is the greatness of God's love: he welcomes us as his true children. He makes us his children in his Son Christ Jesus.

by the theologian,
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