

SPIRITUAL NOTES - FORTITUDE

The series of notes dedicated to virtues is completed

As a last spiritual tattoo I suggest a beautiful "cross". In fact, it is the sign of the power, of the glory and of the strength of our God and Lord. Fortitude, the last of the four cardinal virtues, is the one that allows us to live two important things that I tell you with the words of Saint John the Apostle: "I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God dwells in you and you have overcome the evil one" (1Jn 2:14). Jesus is the "young man" (he was 33 years old!) who with the strength of the Holy Spirit always managed to overcome the evil one, the temptation even on the cross. Do we remember? "Let Christ, the king of Israel, descend from the cross now, so that we see and believe!" (Mk 15:31). Fortitude allows us to live the word of the Lord every day, even if this puts us against the mentality of the world, it makes us go against the current.

Tell me.... Is a person who responds to evil with evil, who is instinctive, who lets himself be overcome by passions, be conditioned by events, influenced by situations and be changed by non-holy friendships a weak or a strong person? Unfortunately he is weak! Instead, the strong person, is the determined person, who does not let himself be intimidated, who knows how to govern himself, he is always lucid in order to make the right choice, to give an enlightening answer, he is not a reed rattled by a different wind every day, but he is

so strong as to let himself be crucified so as not to be overcome by evil, by committing it, or by another mentality denying faith.

Then, let us understand, that we must grow in this virtue because temptations are really many. This is possible with a life of prayer: "Pray so as not to fall into temptation", pray so that in the moment of trial you are not weak, pray so that fortitude of the Holy Spirit is strong in you so as to oppose yourself to the most seductive of temptations.

Why do we have to become strong? Fortitude, like other virtues, is a gift of the Lord to be asked in prayer. And as every gift of the Lord it is aimed at helping the brothers and sisters. In fact: "Let the stronger support the weaker". Today, perhaps, this is precisely what Christianity is lacking: having strong Christians who take the weakest by the hand and help them overcome their temptations and help them to live every word of the Lord. How will we overcome the evil one if we are all weak? "A blind man cannot lead another blind man, because they will both fall into a ditch!" A weak person in faith cannot support another weak person, because both will end up as slaves of sin!

The fortitude of the Holy Spirit is that physical, human, spiritual, moral and mental strength, placed at the service of good and never of evil.

Dear friends, in conclusion, with the virtue of justice we know the laws of the Lord, his will. With the virtue of fortitude we have the courage, the determination and the strength to live the laws of the Lord and his known will. With the virtue of prudence we will only do the good that is pleasing to God. And with the virtue of temperance we will avoid becoming slaves of the things of this world, but we will use them wisely and live truly free, of the freedom of the children of God.

Father Antonio Severino



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As the Father sent me

The Father sent Christ Jesus with a well-defined mission: fulfilling every Word of the Father, attesting his divine origin with signs and wonders, calling every man to the faith in his Person and bringing to completion the redemption of man, through his sacrifice on the cross. We know that Jesus obeyed his Father in everything. He seals his life, on the cross attesting that nothing more remains to be accomplished. Only the mystery of his resurrection, of ascension and of his raising to Lord and Judge of the living and the dead remains to be realized. Whoever separates Jesus from the Father, possesses neither Jesus and nor the Father, because Jesus and the Father are one, eternally indivisible. The invention of the one God is more damaging than the plague, more harmful than leprosy, more poisonous to faith than a cobra bite. Separating Christ Jesus from the Father is worshipping a false Father and also a false Jesus.

The apostles are not sent by the Father to the world. Instead, they are sent by Jesus. Just as Christ Jesus cannot be separated from the Father, so Jesus cannot be separated from the Apostles. Jesus and the Apostles are one. An Apostle, a minister of the Word, or even a baptized person who were to profess the theory of the one God, not only does he sin against Christ, who is the only name in whom it is established that we can be saved, he also sins against his truth. He exists only from Christ, can live only in Christ, can work only with Christ and for Christ, in the Holy Spirit who is perpetually a gift of Christ the Lord. Having eliminated Christ, his mission

is vain, his apostolate useless, his work in the vineyard of the Lord is without any fruit, either of salvation or of redemption. He sets out on a path of eternal perdition and drags behind him an infinite number of men. Many would have been saved if he had not separated from Christ, abandoning himself to idolatry and immorality.

Christ Jesus is the heart of the Father and must be the heart of the disciple. For the heart of the disciple he must become the heart of every other man. If the disciple is not the heart of Christ, those who depend on him will never be the heart of Christ and never might they love with the heart of Christ, think with his thoughts, will with his will, walk with his Holy Spirit, have his mother as his true Mother. Not even the promises of Christ might be fulfilled for him. Without Christ, the whole building of the Church and her sacraments also falls. The evangelizing mission also disappears. We become men with men. We go to the men with the word of men to speak as men with men. Having taken Christ away from the mystery of faith, all his mystery is taken away. Nothing more remains. It is Christ who called the Apostles. It is He who sent them into the world. It is He who has filled them with all divine power and the Holy Spirit. Without Christ, the apostle is a visible ghost, because his reality is either Christ or he is without any reality. Mother of God, ensure that no Christian ever separates himself from Lord Jesus to follow vain idols, which do not give any salvation.

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THE CHRISTIAN DIFFERENCE THAT BRINGS ABOUT TRUTH

Reflections starting from the Lectio divina of H.H. Francis to the Pontifical Lateran University (03.26.2019)

Presenting the passage of the prophet Daniel (Dn 3, 25. 34-43), that is how Pope Francis turns to the teachers and students of the Pontifical Lateran University: "This text contains the prayer of three young sons of Israel: Ananias, Azariah and Misaele, thrown into a great fiery furnace by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, because they refused to worship his gold statue. Their convinced determination to be faithful to God and to preserve their freedom actually exposes them to martyrdom». God intervenes to prevent the flames from hurting them: in fact they "walk in the fire as if "a wind full of dew blew" in the furnace (Dn 3,50); they are accompanied by an angel - one who "in appearance is like a son of gods" (Dn 3,92) - and they begin to praise and pray to God".

The Holy Father underlines the topicality of this passage when it was born: "According to many scholars, the date of composition of the book of Daniel must be placed in the time of the persecution of the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes, before his death in 164 B.C. As the vicissitudes of Daniel and his three young companions take place in the sixth century BC, during the exile in Babylon, let us understand the logic of this biblical book: to courageously face the persecutions suffered in the present, Israel recalls the example of famous personalities of the past (Daniele, the three young people and young Susanna in chap.13), who lived fidelity to God and to his Torah ».

Then he highlights the perennial relevance of the word of God and its surprising novelty: "Listening to the Scriptures starting from today's reality discloses and communicates further meanings, which are

contained in it". Starting from this datum, Francis gives a precise message to his listeners: one can "be enveloped in flames and remain unharmed: it can be done with the help of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the breeze of the Holy Spirit".

The flames he talks about are "the single thought", "the comfortable and stingy individualism" that mark our culture. In this context, Christians are called to strengthen the certainty that one can walk "unharmed thanks to the rooting in Jesus and his Gospel, made current by the power of the Holy Spirit", to "remember the roots" and "the memory of a people", "which is like the sap" that "makes the tree grow and flourish", to live and bear witness to their fidelity to the Gospel.

The study of theology points precisely at this: "Adherence to the Gospel and the acceptance of the rich heritage of ecclesial Tradition, at all levels", above all, want to give "a free, authentic point of view, true to I would say the "sound" reality, with respect to our time", helping not to isolate oneself from the context, but" to inhabit it with critical awareness and the capacity of discernment", in view of that action proper to the Christian as a contribution "to the cultural and social life of the world».

Here is the overwhelming power of the Gospel that opens up to the "we mysticism", to the "primacy given to the relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to the universal communion with the whole of humanity". May the Virgin Mary help us to propose the "Christian difference that brings novelty" by living and announcing the Word in full fidelity to the Spirit and to the Church.

Father Gesualdo De Luca

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT
(II EASTER SUNDAY - Year C)

BELIEVERS IN THE LORD WERE ADDED TO THEM (Acts 5: 12-16)

When the Apostle lives with the heart of Christ Jesus, in the same way that Jesus lives with the heart of the Father, believers are always added to the Lord. Conversion to the Gospel is a reward that the Lord gives to those who obey his Word in the same way as Christ Jesus. Jesus received the multitudes as a reward for his submission to the Father until his death on a cross. The apostle, the disciple, the minister of Christ submits himself to Christ as Christ submitted himself to the Father, offers his life to the Father as Christ offered it and for this gift the Father adds believers to his Church. We must move from a pastoral ministry of works to a mission of obedience and of fidelity to every Word of the Lord. Without this passage, never might the Lord add and the body of Christ will age rather than rejuvenate, it will deprive itself of many members, rather than increase. It will decrease and not increase. It will lose its beauty.

I WAS DEAD, BUT NOW I AM ALIVE FOREVER AND EVER (Rev 1.9-11a.12-13.17-19)

Jesus is the eternal living, he is the Lord, he is the one who has the government of history in his hands. The truth of Jesus must create hope in hearts, it must infuse strength in martyrdom, in suffering and in the fight against the forces of evil. If Jesus, the Crucified One, has conquered death and now lives forever in God, even the disciple of Jesus will be resurrected by him and made alive for the Lord God. Christian martyrdom is not the declaration of nullity or of vanity of a life, but it is the way through which one reaches the greatest glory

in the heavens. As Jesus passed from the cross to the eternal light, so too does the Christian passes from suffering to the glory of heaven. Sufferings are of a moment, glory and bliss will be eternal. Jesus reveals himself to John in his glory and in his Lordship so that his apostle gives a true hope to all believers in him. Persecutions are the way of glory. Martyrdom is the way of divine light.

MY LORD AND MY GOD! (Jn 20,19-31)

The confession of faith of Thomas must be the confession of faith of every man. As Jesus is the Lord and the God of Thomas, he must be the God and Lord of every man. There is no truth for an apostle that is not truth for every other apostle, because the truth of Jesus is objective and not subjective, real and not ideal, essential and not only spiritual, natural and not because it is imagined. If Jesus is God by nature, Lord by nature because he is God and also by elevation on the part of the Father in his humanity, due to the gift of the whole life that He made him, this truth is not only for the disciples, it is truth for every man. Objective truth is objective truth independently of the faith of those who believe or those who do not believe. It has its own life independent of faith. They may not even believe in Christ, but Christ remains eternally the Lord and God of my life, the source of my eternal life. Is there then a difference between those who believe and those who do not believe? Whoever believes will taste the fruits of the objective truth of Jesus. Whoever does not believe might never enjoy a single fruit of life.

by the theologian,

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