

Notes - Pillars of community life

At the end of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the evangelist Luke offers us this portrait of the first Christian community: "They were persevering in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion, in breaking bread and praying. A sense of fear was in everyone, and wonders and signs took place through the work of the apostles. All believers stayed together and had everything in common; they sold their properties and substances and shared them with everyone, according to the need of each (...) ».

There is no doubt that the first Christian community has a paradigmatic, exemplary value for the Christian communities of every place and every time. Therefore, it is useful that we pause for a few moments on its pillars, its fundamental characteristics, so that we can also work to build our communities on this solid foundation.

1. Teaching of the Apostles - The first aspect emphasized by St. Luke is the perseverance of the first Christians in the teaching of the Apostles. Concord in the only true faith, professed by the Apostles in communion with Peter, is in fact the first requisite so that communion in the Church is preserved. Without it the flock divides and disperses, going after "various and foreign doctrines" (Letter to Hebrews 13, 19), which betray the essence of the Gospel. We must be certain that the teaching of Peter and the Apostles in communion with him (and also of the successors of Peter and the Apostles, popes and

bishops) will faithfully guard the truth of Jesus' teaching until the end of time, because he himself entrusted this mission to Peter, assuring him a special assistance. By persevering, that is, by remaining and growing in the knowledge of the Church's teaching, we will always remain and grow, as the first community, in communion with the Lord and among us.

2-3. Breaking bread and prayer - The first community shares the heavenly Bread, the Body and Blood of its Lord, which feeds those who have become one Body with Him in Baptism, before than the earthly bread. When with a humble heart and a straight conscience we feed on the Eucharist, we cement our union with Christ and with the other members of his Body, the Church. Then, next to the nourishment of the only Bread of life, there is that of prayer. Praying, and praying together, is essential so that temptation does not take over, leading us to disintegration. And it is essential that the members of each community feel the spiritual duty to support and strengthen each other with prayer.

4. "...they stayed together and had everything in common..." - Jesus had left as a "testament" to his disciples the new commandment of mutual love, from which the world would have recognized that they belonged to Him. The first community applies this testament, making communion - not only of faith and spiritual - the personal lifestyle. In an authentic Christian community, nobody must lack what is necessary. Fraternal love, to which the Gospel calls us, requires us to be attentive to the spiritual and material needs of each other and those who have more must feel the duty to give to their brothers what is not strictly necessary for their life.

A community built on these pillars of the truth of faith, of the life of grace and charity is a house founded on the Rock. A welcoming and inviting home, which the Lord will enrich with new tenants every day.

Father Davide Marino

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

Paradise is a free gift from God. No one, not even if he consumed his whole life offering it as a sacrifice to the Lord, could have the right to such a divine and eternal gift. It goes beyond human possibilities. Instead, for his great love, our God has decided to make us participants in his life and eternal glory, making himself, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, a gift for us in time and for eternity. Today, who lives of Him and for Him, in his mystery of light, tomorrow will enjoy endless joy and bliss. The rules for living the gift were proclaimed by Him, never might they be posed by man. The doctor of the Law wants to be certain about the laws established by God and for this he asks Jesus: "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

What leads to this legacy and what excludes from it? The answer can be contained in a single word: fidelity to the given rules. Whoever believes in the Word of God and remains faithful to it for all the days of his life, will inherit these precious goods. Instead who does not want to believe or does not persevere in fidelity will be excluded from them. Both the Old and the New Testament are this truth. The Christian is called to live the whole Word of his Master and Lord, in fullness of obedience, without adding or taking anything away, following the example that Jesus left us. He made himself obedient to the Father until his death on the cross. Even the Christian must consume his days in perfect obedience to the Word, without any interruption. The Word is that of the Gospel, of Scripture, of the Holy Spirit and

written in the Canonical Texts. It is the light and gentle yoke that Christ Jesus brought and wants us to carry too. If we persevere, surely the Lord will be faithful to what he promised. We know that the Lord never failed in even a single Word of his., once it comes out of his mouth, the Word is eternal Law for our God.

Today the Christian evil is only one: the separation of eternal life from the Word, the written and objective one, fixed on paper and engraved in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Today it is preached and it is taught that fidelity is useless. Fidelity has been replaced with mercy. It is deliberately omitted to say that all the mercy of God is governed by the Law of fidelity. God is merciful because he grants forgiveness and offers us eternal life as a gift, in repentance, in conversion and in reconciliation. Every divine gift cannot be made ours except in faith in the Word. They will be ours as long as we are faithful to the Word in which we believed. Until we live in the Word we are in God and God is in us. We get out of the Word, God comes out of us and we come out of God. We cannot inherit eternal life. Faith in the Word and fidelity to it, with lasting obedience, have disappeared today. Everything is founded on a false notion of divine mercy. It is false because it is without faith in the Word and without fidelity to it. Mother of God, ensure that every Christian returns to the sources of faith, truth, fidelity and justice. It is the only way that leads to the eternal kingdom.

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AT THE SCHOOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR A HOLY MISSION

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis on the Solemnity of Pentecost (09.06.2019)

Looking at the experience of the Apostles with the Risen One before and, after, under the action of the Holy Spirit, we see a substantial difference. While the Risen One is still with the Apostles, these are still afraid, wishing that the prophecy of the restoration of the Kingdom of the Lord be fulfilled, but concentrated on keeping their lives safe and staying away from all those who could kill them. When the Holy Spirit descends on the Apostles, operates a complete transformation: fear disappears, all reticence disappears, all doubt and will to stay away from opponents disappear and the announcement of the crucified and risen Christ made frankly begins.

Let us pause a moment to consider what happens. The social situation does not change, dangers are not eliminated and opponents are not removed from the sight of the Apostles. The Apostles are the ones that change. The Holy Spirit strengthens them, gives them wisdom and intelligence, light and frankness to carry on the announcement that the Risen One had entrusted them. From this we understand what the role of the Holy Spirit for the Apostles and for the Church is. Jesus himself had already indicated it by saying: "But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming" (Jn 16, 13). In this sense, "the Spirit has brought into the lives of the disciples a harmony that was lacking, his, because He is harmony" (Homily).

It is the very essence of the Holy Spirit: He is communion, harmony, wisdom, peace, serenity, fortitude, life, joy and courage. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the

disciple is the bearer of both inner and outer harmony. He is the one that distributes spiritual gifts and harmonizes them so that they can bear fruit for the whole community.

If we look at today's society and think that we should act according to the modalities dictated by the Spirit in a world that operates according to completely opposite canons, it seems to us a utopia to be able to succeed in doing so, it can appear as something unrealizable from our point of view. If we change our point of view and look at reality with the eyes of the Holy Spirit, then everything changes, because He transforms us and enables us to work according to his modalities and to bring order and serenity to every place where we go and work.

It is a matter of decision and conversion change from our thoughts to those of the Holy Spirit, from our will to His, from our eyes to His eyes. Such a conversion is possible if we have the will and commitment to remain in obedience to the Word revealed by Christ and understood and deepened from time to time through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church. It is the Holy Spirit the one that speaks through the divine Word and it is the Holy Spirit present in the listener the one that translates the Word into lived life. If the Holy Spirit is present in the disciple, this will understand the announced Word, and strengthened and vivified by the Holy Spirit he will manage to live it.

Virgin Mary, Bride of the Holy Spirit and Holy Temple of God, teach us to guard the gift of the Spirit and to cooperate with him for the fulfillment of the mission that the Lord entrusts to us from day to day.

Father Gregorio Nicola Corea

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

GO AND DO LIKEWISE
(XV SUNDAY O.T. - Year C)

KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS AND STATUTES (Deut 30,10-14)

The Lord has placed every life, blessing, prosperity and peace in his Law, in his Decrees, in listening to his Voice and in obedience to his Word. However, everything starts from the observance of the Ten Commandments. If the two Tablets of the Law are transgressed, there is no path with the Lord and consequently the man condemns himself to go through a desert in which there are dryness, famine and poisonous snakes. To every man the choice: whether to walk in the Law of the Lord, in whose obedience, the desert will be transformed into a garden, or if he wants to abandon fidelity to the Word. Infidelity will transform the garden into a desert. Every man must choose. The choice is personal. Each will show others the fruits of the choice of the Word. Even the fruits of the non-choice of the Word are evident and under everyone's eyes. Are not today, the thousands of daily deaths attesting that man has turned the garden into a desert?

THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM
(Col 1,15-20)

Saint Paul, the great singer of the mystery of our God, reveals to believers what the mystery the Father has established to realize on our earth is: redeeming, saving and sanctifying every man through Christ and in view of Christ. Not only through Christ, but also in view of Christ. What does in view of Christ mean? That there is neither redemption nor salvation except by becoming the body of Christ, living with Christ and for Christ. Christ Jesus is the heart of the Father and must be the heart of every man, through the work of the Holy Spirit. If Christ is taken away from the mystery of salvation, there is

no longer any salvation. There are conjectures of salvation, thoughts of salvation, but they are only conjectures and thoughts of man, thoughts and conjectures of vanity. Christ is everything for the Father and wants to be everything for every man. Making every man the body of Christ is the duty of every apostle of the Lord. It is his one and only mission. The rest is of the Father and the Spirit.

AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?
(Lk 10, 25-37)

Neighbour is the nearest man who stands before another man. Since man is not a tree, but he is a person that moves, walks, gets around, changes places, every man in front of him is a neighbour. The man of God has two very precise obligations towards every man: observing the Law of perfect justice which is the Commandments. Living the Law of charity or holiness manifested to him by his Lord and God. One does not love his neighbour from his own heart, from his own will and from the feelings or thoughts of other people. The neighbour is loved by obeying the two positive laws: of justice and charity or divine holiness. This double law obliges everyone, since everyone is neighbour to the other. Neighbour is not the welcome for the welcoming, it is also the welcoming for the welcome. It is not only the poor for the rich, but it is also the rich for the poor. For poor Lazarus, the rich man is for him a true neighbour, in fact he observes both the Law of justice and charity concerning the rich. He desires nothing of the other's assets. He just wants to be treated like one of his dogs.

by the theologian,
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