

NOTES - A BOOK. Gregorio Nicola Corea, The new man deified in Christ, Assisi 2018.

Reading the letters of Saint Paul, in some passages like Ephesians chapter 2 and the Second Corinthians chapter 5, we receive the announcement of the creation by God of the new man. Above all, this new man is Christ, who has in himself the person and the divine nature of the eternal Word and the perfect and sinless human nature, capable of living in perfect obedience to the will of the Father. Saint Paul always tells us: "If one is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor 5:17) and St. Peter adds: "His divine power has given us all that is necessary for a life lived in holiness, thanks to the knowledge of the one who called us with his power and glory. With this he gave us the very great and precious goods promised to us, so that by their means you become partakers of the divine nature, escaping corruption, which is in the world because of concupiscence" (2 Pt 1: 3-4). From these passages we understand that every man who listens to the Word of Jesus, believes in it, lets himself be baptized and lives according to the law of the Spirit can become a new man.

An announcement of this kind brings confusion in the mind and heart of those who up to now have lived totally immersed in the life of this world without ever raising their eyes upwards. At the origins of the Church, some thinkers have reflected far and wide on

this announcement and have investigated what it taught for the life of Christians, but also on its meaning in reference to the identity of the Christian himself in relation to Christ, to the Father and the Holy Spirit. This work of theirs led to the discovery of the principle that went down in history with the name of divinization of man. We are talking about the Fathers of the Eastern Church, who were more sensitive to reflection on these issues. They showed how God, in his plan of salvation, decided to heal the man fallen into sin and death by recreating him and giving him the opportunity to share his own life with him. However, it is a conditional gift. To be able to receive it and to take advantage of it, it is necessary to let ourselves be transformed by God himself through his Word and the grace granted through the Holy Spirit, working intensely to purify our lives from all that weighs it down and deforms it and to know increasingly better God growing from grace to grace.

This is broadly the path of the deification of man that is presented in this book, following the reflection of three great fathers of the Church: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. In their specificity, they have deepened this path according to what was needed by the Christian communities of which they were pastors, but by putting together their reflections it is possible to compose the whole theme of the divinization of man presenting it in all its facets and implications. Such is a part of the purpose of this publication, the second part is to show how these reflections are still current and able to make understand, even to modern man, the need to change course in order to be able to fully live one's life by accessing his true identity and living according to it.

You worry and get upset about many things

Few know that our very pure faith is founded on a new and eternal covenant between our God, for Christ Jesus, in the Holy Spirit and every man who welcomes the proposal of his Lord, Creator and Redeemer. Here are the terms of the covenant: man, You commit yourself to observe my every Word, to obey my Law and to listen to my Voice. In your fidelity to what I command you, I will be for you blessing, life, prosperity, help, consolation and creator of an eternal hope. If you are faithful to me, I will be faithful to you. If you deny me, I will always remain faithful to my promise. If you come back to me, I will welcome you. As long as you are in time, I will always grant you my forgiveness, as long as you get converted and return to fidelity to my Word, to my Law and to my Voice. These are the terms set by God to enter into his covenant, from which all life is for those who observe it and remain faithful to it.

Then, what is the mission of the one who stipulated and made a covenant with his Lord and God? Obeying every Word on which the covenant has been made. Man does not have to worry about anything else, but only to obey. Obedience costs nothing. It is the gentle and light yoke that the Lord has placed on our shoulders. Obedience begins with the Ten Commandments, to which Jesus gave full fulfillment in his Sermon on the Mount. When one wants a Christianity without obedience, it is then that the disciple of Jesus enters into trouble and is suffocated by it. The evils of the world are so many and so numerous that no man, no power

of this earth might ever heal them. They are all the fruit of our disobedience to the Law of the Lord. How many worries, reaching even to despair and even to murder and suicide, do families broken up by the scourge of divorce generate today? No law of the earth might heal from this plague of death. It would be enough to remain faithful to the Lord's Commandment and everything would be without anxiety, without despair and without deaths. This is the foolishness of man: getting out of the Law of the covenant and thinking that his life progresses from good to good and from excellence to excellence. We leave the Statutes of the covenant, we enter the law of spiritual, physical and eternal death. We enter the impossibility of solving just one of our problems.

Martha is the woman who wants to be the one to think for the Lord. She falls into anxiety, worry, fatigue and total confusion. She is the image and figure of the Christian who is the one to think about what to do for his God. Instead, Mary is the figure, image and model of the Christian who first places himself in listening to his God and then does what the Lord showed him. If the Christian understood that, if he follows his thoughts, he will remain drowned in them, he would immediately place himself in listening to his God and obey with great solicitude. Instead he wants to be from his thoughts, he struggles and consumes his days in vain. Mother of God, teach us that the Christian life is only obedience and very pure listening.

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"WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU ARE MINDFUL OF HIM?"

Reflections from the Homily of H.H. Francis on his visit to the Camerino earthquake zone (16.6.2019)

«“What is man that you are mindful of him?”, we prayed in the Psalm (8.5). These words came to my mind thinking of you. Faced with what you have seen and suffered, faced with collapsed houses and buildings reduced to rubble, this question comes: what is man?” (Homily).

With these words the Holy Father began his homily at the earthquake-stricken areas of the Diocese of Camerino-Sanseverino Marche.

Verse 5 of Psalm 8 contains another sentence that completes it: "What is man that you are mindful of him? A son of man that you care for him?" The Lord always remembers man, always takes care of him. He remembers and cares for man, calling Abraham and for his obedience he blesses all the nations of the earth (Gn 22,18). The Lord remembers and takes care of man calling Moses to free his people from the slavery and oppression of Pharaoh. The Lord remembers and takes care of man by arousing the prophets so that they return to him with all their heart and do not get lost on the path of idolatry. The Lord remembers and cares for man when he sees him incapable and powerless to overcome the force of evil and sin and sends His Son, the first Paraclete, so that he carries and expiates all sins in place of man. The Lord remembers and takes care of man by sending us His Spirit, the second Paraclete, so that he may cure us, heal us, console us and help us overcome the desires of the flesh, the origin of all spiritual, material and social ills. The Lord remembers and cares for man by founding His Church so that in her man may find the Medicine of immortality, the Eucharist, find forgiveness and mercy in

the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the light of the Word so as not to walk in darkness and communion with the brothers so as not to be alone. The Lord remembers and takes care of man, arousing in every time saints who bring us back onto the path of peace, justice and holiness.

"God does not leave us in oblivion. No one is contemptible in his eyes, each has an infinite value for Him [...] Let us ask for the grace to remember every day that we are not forgotten by God, that we are his beloved, unique and irreplaceable children: remembering it gives us the strength to not surrender before the setbacks of life" (Homily).

Each of us, each with his vocation, charisma and ministry is called to be a witness of the One and Triune God who remembers and cares for man: "Everyone can do a little good, without waiting for others to be the ones to begin. "I'll be the one start, I'll be the one to start, I'll be the one to start": that is what everyone has to say. Everyone can console someone, without waiting for his problems to be solved. Even carrying my cross, I try to get closer to console others" (Homily).

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Mother of the disciple, You always remember us, your children, interceding with God the Father for our salvation. You always take care of us by telling us like at the Cana wedding: "Do whatever he tells you," that is, live according to the Word of my Son Jesus. Together with the Angels and Saints grant us the grace of humility in letting us be healed by the three times holy God that remembers us.

Father Antonio Severino

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

THERE IS NEED OF ONLY ONE THING
(XVI SUNDAY O.T. - Year C)

SARAH WILL THEN HAVE A SON
(Jan 18,1-10a)

When the Lord our God pronounces a Word, it is for him law and eternal obligation. God and his Word are one and not two things. Loyalty to what came out of his mouth never fails. Eternity is for us the fruit of his word, eternity both of Heaven and hell. He promised Abraham that he would have given him a descent from Sara. Time, a long time goes by. Abraham is put to the test. He must trust his God. Now the time for fulfillment has come. The Lord goes to visit Abraham and promises him that the time has come to implement what was promised: in a year from now, Sara will have her child in her arms. We must learn from the life of Abraham a very high truth: our faith is always tested by the Lord. We must trust Him, never doubting. Centuries and millennia can even go by. He always keeps what he promised.

I AM FILLING UP WHAT IS LACKING IN
THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST
(Col 1.24-28)

The body of Christ is one, not two. The crucified body and the resurrected body are one body. The body received by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary and the body which every day receives in the waters of baptism, always through the work of the Holy Spirit, are one body, not two. If they are one body, each one must accomplish in his flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, in favour of his body which is the Church. As the body born of the Virgin Mary has redeemed the world by way of the cross, so the body that is born of the waters of baptism fulfills the redemption of humanity, pas-

sing by the way of the cross. One body, one mission, one redemption, one glory and everything must happen by the work of the Holy Spirit, but in Christ, with Christ and for Christ. Whoever wants to be in the body of the glorious Christ must be in the body of the crucified Christ. By the way of the cross to the way of light, in Christ.

MARIA HAS CHOSEN THE BETTER
PART (Lk 10.38-42)

Mary has chosen the better part, because she chose to live her life, just listening to her Lord and obeying his voice. He asks and she carries out. He demands and she executes. He speaks and she realizes what she has heard. Mary chose to live in the manner of Christ Jesus. The Father speaks and He listens. The Father commands and He obeys. The Father wants and He performs all his wishes. Instead, Marta is anxious, fatigued and agitated because she has decided to do everything from her will. She wants to do ten thousand things, she cannot succeed in one, she blames Jesus because he doesn't understand that it's time to send Mary to help her. Martha is foolish because she wants her sister to live a relationship with her Lord and God starting from her own will. Our religion is only obedience. We obey, we do the will of God, the world is redeemed. Our will is done, no redemption will ever take place in the world, because redemption is obedience to God. When the Christian feels tired and oppressed by history, it is a sign that he has separated himself from obedience to his God.

by the theologian,
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