

The Pope recalls that Jesus did not like adults to treat young people with contempt or to keep them at their service in a despotic manner, without respecting their freedom and personality. Age does not establish privileges. Being younger does not mean being worth less: "The Word of God says that young people must be treated" as brothers" (1 Tim 5:1) and recommends parents: "Do not exasperate your children, so that they do not become discouraged" (Col 3:21). A young person cannot be discouraged, his characteristic is that of dreaming of great things, searching for broad horizons, daring more, wanting to conquer the world, being able to accept demanding proposals and wanting to give his best to build something better. That is why I insist with the young that they do not let themselves be robbed of hope and to each I repeat: "Let no one despise your young age" (1 Tim 4:12) "(Christus vivit, 15).

Of course, on the one hand, if adults have to be careful about gestures and words that could suffocate the yearnings of children, on the other hand, even young people must respect and honour people older in age, from whom they can receive teachings and positive values. But, beyond everything, I believe that the heart of the Apostolic Exhortation lies in the overcoming of divisions, in the ap-

peal to communion that is realized only if we all grow spiritually: "Those of us who are no longer young need opportunities to have their voices and their stimulus close, and "closeness creates the conditions so that the Church is a space for dialogue and a testimony of fraternity that fascinates". We need to create more spaces where the voices of young people resonate: "Listening makes it possible to exchange gifts, in a context of empathy. [...] At the same time it sets the conditions for an announcement of the Gospel that truly reaches the heart, in an incisive and fruitful way"" (38).

As God does, who always creates a place for his people, we adults too must create spaces in which young people can enrich us with their talents. However, before the physical space, it is necessary to prepare the space of the heart where the merciful beauty of Christ must reign. In fact, Christ is the true youth of the world: "Everything He touches becomes young, becomes new and is filled with life" (1).

We must give voice to him just to announce to those who are far and distant from the Church that "He lives and wants you alive!" (1). The Lord never leaves, not even when we turn away from Him: "When you feel old for sadness, grudges, fears, doubts or failures, He will be there to give you back strength and hope" (2).

These words are of great hope. Here's what ages the spirit: disappointments, sadness, failure and fear. It is perhaps, then, that no such things are or will not be in life? Of course there will be, but behind these moments of darkness, if we will have kept lit faith in the Word of God, almost in transparency, we will always see Jesus, ready to get us up again with the ways that he alone knows and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(continues)

Anna Guzzi

Will the Son of man find faith on earth?

Faith is born of the Word of the Apostles, the Word that is in Scripture and in the Holy Spirit. The Apostle draws the Word without interruption in Scripture and in the Holy Spirit and first transforms it into his life. Then as the Word transformed into his heart, his spirit and his soul, he gives it as the Word of eternal life to every other man through its preaching. It must never be forgotten that faith is similar to a tree entrusted to the care of both the Apostles and of every other disciple of Jesus, so that always in the Holy Spirit it is cured so that it produces excellent fruits of conversion, justification, sanctification and eternal salvation. Many Christians have transformed this tree of truth and justice according to God into a tree of heresy, falsehood, lie, idolatry, immorality and every spiritual disorder. But many others have shed their blood on it so that it grew and produced every fruit of truth and love, hope and justice. The blood of martyrs is seed of other faith.

Then, it becomes necessary for each of us to ask himself: has the tree of faith that was planted in me by the Church and by the Holy Spirit, been eradicated from the garden of Scripture, of grace, of truth and of the light that are in Christ Jesus, to be transplanted into the field of Satan and his lies or deceptions? Or do I day by day commit myself to pour my spiritual and even physical sweat on it, so that it can reach fruitfulness? During his earthly life, on the tree of his faith, every day, Jesus poured the sweat of his daily humiliations and insults

that came from men. He poured the sweat of that constant spiritual stoning made to him by scribes, Pharisees and many others. In the Garden of Olives he shed the blood of his sweat and on the cross he offered his whole self to the Father, flesh and blood, as a holocaust, so that the tree of his faith and obedience became the source of grace, of the Holy Spirit and of light and truth for every man.

He received the tree of faith, he made it grow in his body, in his soul and in his spirit, he handed it over to his disciples in the richest form, charged with every fruit of conversion and salvation. He delivered it full of the Holy Spirit. I, a disciple of Jesus, how will I hand over the tree of my faith today and tomorrow when I will be called to enter eternity? Does it today produce fruits of greater sanctification for my life and of true conversion and authentic faith for others? If the tree of my faith is already dead today, when the Lord comes, he will not find any faith on earth for me. My tree is already dead. Then, here is the answer to be given to Jesus' question. Faith is entrusted to the responsibility of each one. Martyrs and confessors made it live and left it to posterity in a shining form. The blessed of heaven have themselves also given good vigour and good energy. The souls in purgatory have lived it and handed it over in a flawed way. The damned of hell have made it die in their hearts. Mother of God, help our faith so that it is in all similar to yours.

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"GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD" (GEN 1:25).
CUSTODY OF THE COMMON HOME IN THE LIGHT
OF THE WORD OF GOD

*Reflections from the Message of H.H. Francis
for the World Day of Prayer for the care of creation (1.9.2019)*

On the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, the Holy Father Francis urged the whole Church to raise her praise and gratitude to God the Creator: "In silence and in prayer we can listen to the symphonic voice of creation, which exhorts us to come out of our self-referential closures to rediscover ourselves wrapped in the tenderness of the Father and happy to share the gifts received".

The Pope's brief reflections find their foundation in the first chapters of Genesis. As the Sacred Text reports, at the end of his creative activity, God is pleased with what is the fruit of his will, his freedom and his love. The Sacred Author writes: "God saw that it was good". «At the beginning of the Bible, the gaze of God gently lays on creation. From the land to be inhabited to the waters that feed life, from the trees that bear fruit to the animals that inhabit the common home, everything is dear to God, who offers man creation as a precious gift to be kept" (Message).

However, God's original plan has been deeply affected by sin. Reading the Genesis text carefully, one realizes that the hostile relationship of man with his surroundings, even his fellow man, springs from the loss of the Word of God and the replacement of it with the word of the serpent. In this regard, the Pope notes in the text of the message: "Tragically, the human response to the gift has been marked by sin, by the closure in his own autonomy, by the greed to possess and exploit. [...] Thus the very environment was endangered, a good thing in the eyes of God having become an exploitable element in

human hands".

First of all, becoming promoters of a true ecology means reconstructing the disconnection between the Word of God and the word of man, who lives in the most absolute self-reference. Man has forgotten his origin in God, who made him in his image and likeness, placing him "at the centre of a net of life made up of millions of species lovingly joined by our Creator", considering himself, on the contrary, not more guardian and lord of the created reality, but a ruthless tyrant. This is because he no longer recognizes the authority of a law above him, which has its origins and roots in God and in his Word, but claims to legislate according to the motions of his own instinct and will.

Therefore, a deep and conscious conversion to the Word is also necessary in the ecological sphere, because only with the light that emanates from it, man is able to establish a true and sincere relationship with God, with himself, with others and with creation, recovering that original communion that reigned in the garden of Eden before sin. Therefore, let us welcome the Pope's invitation, contributing «to weaving, as a thin but unique and indispensable thread, the network of life that embraces everyone», in the awareness that moving a single thread the whole network itself moves: from our personal adherence and obedience to the Word that of our whole humanity depends.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, the most beautiful flower of the whole creation, obtain for us a purer and more perfect obedience to the Word.

Father Antonio Lupia

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

LEST SHE FINALLY COME AND STRIKE ME
(XXIX SUNDAY O.T. - Year C)

WITH THE STAFF OF GOD IN MY HAND
(Ex 17,8-13)

Joshua is sent to fight against Amalek. We are in the Old Testament. Yet the Lord did not even make the Commandments ring out among the children of Israel. For the words of Jesus to be heard spoken on the mountain still have to go by twelve hundred years. No man of God can defeat the enemy of the Lord's people, today of the body of Christ Jesus, who is Satan, if not with the strength and power of the Holy Spirit. The staff of God, the sign of the divine omnipotence, is raised to heaven to implore from the Lord for Joshua and his fighters every celestial force so that the enemy is defeated. When the strength of God comes down, Joshua is victorious. When Moses gets tired of holding the staff up, Amalek is stronger. For Moses not to get tired, he is helped. It is thus attested that communion is also a law for Moses. He too must let himself be supported. He can do almost nothing alone.

KNOW SACRED SCRIPTURES FROM
CHILDHOOD (2Tm 3.34-4.2)

Why is it necessary to know the Holy Scriptures well? Is it not enough for the apostle or disciple of Jesus to speak from the Holy Spirit who is in his heart? It is not enough, because witnesses must be two: Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, rather in the New Testament the witnesses must be three: Scriptures, the apostle and the Holy Spirit. Scriptures are the universal objective datum. They oblige every disciple of Jesus to obedience. We must all obey the Gospel and the Gospel is not the one thought of by men, but the written one. The apostle and the whole body of Christ read the Gospel,

the apostle explains it in the Holy Spirit and gives it in nourishment to every man. He gives it to the Christian so that he grows from faith to faith and from truth to truth. He gives it to those who still do not believe, so that they may get converted and believe in the Word to obtain eternal life. The listener must always recognize that nothing is from the mind of the apostle.

ABOUT THE NECESSITY TO PRAY
ALWAYS WITHOUT BECOMING WEARY
(Lk 18,1-8)

It is right to ask: why does the Lord want an insistent prayer so that he hears our cry for help? When one asks God, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, it is always right that the person praying is first of all the one to believe in the necessity or urgency of what he asks. It is right that he distinguishes requests for ambitions, vanity, uselessness and requests for necessity, urgent need, or of any other nature. If the request is for vanity, one asks for a day and then he stops. We don't need the requested grace. Instead, if grace is necessary, indispensable and even urgent, then we will never fail in the request. When we stop praying, it is a sign that what we asked for was not necessary for us. God always tests the heart. He often compresses it in the press of waiting as the winemaker passes the marc into the press to draw even the last drops of must. Those who tire of asking testify that grace does not serve them and can also live without it. Instead, who never gets tired tells the Lord that that grace serves him in the same way that his soul needs to live and he never fails.

*by the theologian,
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