

Notes - Mary in the "Christus vivit": "If to be in love now / I had to be hurt ..."

In *Christus vivit* Pope Francis cites a poem by Francisco Luis Bernárdez which acts as a splendid embroidery of profound theological and cultural reflections (cf. *Christus vivit*, 61). The context is that of the exhortation addressed to the young so that they do not become photocopies, but realize the fullness of their being in Christ Jesus. To do this, it is necessary to recognize the necessity of the sacrifice which, in due time, will bear fruit and make youth itself fruitful.

In poetry, the time of sacrifice and generous donation is represented by various images. I limit myself to detecting that of the wound, which could recall the whole literary, classical and Italian tradition of the vulnus of love. It is not a question of pain as an end in itself, but of an existential mystery that allows and serves a kind of greater 'falling in love': 'If to be in love now / I had to be hurt, / I think it was right having suffered what I suffered, ...'. In this light, disappointments and sufferings open up to hope in a God who is Father and who never abandons his children if they humbly start walking towards His Word. He is a God capable of transforming the wounds of each into new ways of beauty that attract to His Church. It is perhaps useful to also grasp in this image the self-denial which the Lord asks of his disciples, in a special way to those he calls to a special consecration, be it to priesthood or religious life and to conse-

crated laity, as in the case of Secular Institute "Mary, Mother of the Redemption", born from the womb of the Apostolic Movement.

Therefore, I asked myself: what can this Pope's Exhortation suggest to a consecrated lay person like me? Of course, the need to deny the personal I on the path of embraced evangelical counsels (chastity, poverty, obedience) and to offer personal wounds and sufferings for the redemption of the world, but also the need to show the youth without time of the Virgin Mary, icon of a fresh and missionary Church, in the contemporary world. Mary is the girl from Nazareth who says her yes to the angel with strength and determination. She does not let herself be stopped by fear. And yet, she didn't know what she was going against, she didn't have everything clear or assured. Mary feels various feelings: she exults with joy before the wonders of the Lord; she keeps everything in her heart; she is uneasy and ready to leave when Elizabeth needs help; she risks heading towards a distant country, Egypt, to protect her child. Hers is never submissiveness and a passive acceptance of events. Mary "lost" herself in God's will to be reborn with him; she was wounded by pain, but not defeated (cf 45).

Then, from the Virgin we can learn the creative patience that is never discouraged, that is young because it is capable of starting again from scratch in the awareness that Christ is the true Lord of history and that, even if it were to tell us that we are worth nothing, He, instead, trusts and loves us as we are. In fact, Jesus makes every work of the just succeed and always opens up new paths for his children, even in the darkness of the night, so that their love may be so great as to explode witnessing to the profound beauty of His Word. Among so many noises and distractions, then let us ask the Virgin Mary to be able to imitate this creative and silent patience, a secret current that produces "flowers" of holiness by burying the egoism of the I. (Anna Guzzi)

Instead he did nothing wrong

The Messiah, the Christ of God, must be pure, holy, just, immaculate, spotless in the soul, in the spirit and in the body. He must never know sin, transgression, disobedience, even in a very small thing, a thought of the mind and a desire of the heart. On Golgotha, Jesus is crucified in the midst of two evildoers. The first challenges Jesus to get down from the cross, freeing himself and also freeing them from that horrible and cruel torture. Instead, the second sees himself. He confesses to be a criminal, observes Jesus and testifies to his innocence, his justice and his holiness. "Instead, he did nothing wrong." From this confession, sustained by the light of the Holy Spirit, he takes a further step. If Jesus is crucified and is innocent, he is certainly pierced for our sins. But who is pierced for the sins of the world? The Servant of the Lord. Who is the Servant of the Lord? His Messiah and Christ. The Christ of God is the mistreated, humiliated, insulted, slapped, nailed and killed Servant. The cross is the way to take possession of his eternal kingdom.

Then, from the true faith in Christ Jesus comes the prayer: "Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom". The answer is immediate: "In truth I tell you: today you will be with me in paradise". The Word of Jesus is fulfilled: "Whoever recognizes me before men, I will also recognize him before my Father who is in heaven". The thief recognizes Christ in his truth as Messiah, Servant of the Lord, Saviour. Jesus attests to him that his confession is true. Today he will be with him in

heaven and will be recognized as his witness before the Father. Everything is from faith. For us disciples faith consists in the true confession of Jesus the Lord. Jesus is confessed by attesting to his truth. Who is Jesus? He is the Lord. He is the Christ of God. He is his suffering Servant. He is the grace and truth. He is the way and life. He is the light that must illuminate the Father before every man. He is the universal Mediator between the Father and the universe. Nothing comes from the Father except through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Nothing rises to the Father except through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. If Jesus is not confessed according to this very pure faith, He will not be able to confess us before the Father and for us it is eternal death.

The Christian is not a social worker. Social works are the fruit in him of the upright, perfect confession of Christ Jesus and obedience to his Word and to his Gospel. We live the Gospel, we work for the benefit of every man according to the purest truth and charity. Before anything the Christian's mission is spiritual. He must teach every man the way that leads to the right confession of Christ Jesus. Not only does the good thief confess Jesus before his conscience, he attests his justice before his companion of injustice. We are sinners. He is right. We are on the cross for our evil deeds. He is on the cross because he is the Christ of God. The confession that earned him instantly Heaven. Mother of God, obtain for us the grace to confess Christ Jesus in purity of truth, science and doctrine in the Holy Spirit.

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VIRTUOUS LIFE GENERATES AND NURTURES SOLIDARITY AMONG PEOPLES

*Reflections in the light of the Message of H.H. Francis
for World Food Day (10/16/2019)*

On the occasion of this year's World Food Day, Pope Francis invited the Church and the International Community to reflect on some very important issues for the achievement "of the authentic and integral progress of the whole human family" (Message).

First of all it is necessary to focus on the human person, and not the market economy, in all commercial activities between states and within them. The person created in the image and likeness of God and therefore bearer of a very high dignity, which cannot be scorned with attitudes of indifference and power logic that want to enslave and exploit it: "The fight against hunger and malnutrition will not cease until the logic of the market and only profit at all costs will be sought, prevail exclusively, reducing food to a mere commercial product, subject to financial speculation and distorting its cultural, social and highly symbolic value. The first concern must always be the human person, [...] because only when it is placed in its proper place, then humanitarian aid operations and development programs will have a greater impact and give the desired results" (ibid.).

Another urgency is getting out of selfishness in order to open up to solidarity, aimed at sharing and realizing "economic institutions and social programs that allow the poorest to have regular access to basic resources" (ibid.). It appears «cruel, unjust and paradoxical that, today, there is food for everyone and, nevertheless, not everyone can access it; or that there are regions of the world where food is wasted, is thrown away, is consumed in excess or is destined

for other purposes that are not for feeding" (ibid.).

It should also be emphasized that according to the logic of the Gospel it is necessary to have a virtuous and not sinful relationship with food. It should not be forgotten that the gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins and that a disordered use of food brings diseases, even serious ones, that damage the body and can prevent the realization of the project that God has on the individual Christian. For many, "food ceases to be a means of subsistence to become a channel of personal destruction" (ibid.). As it is known, there are not few "diseases related to opulence that derive from an imbalance "by excess", whose effects are often diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and other forms of degenerative diseases" (ibid.).

Therefore, the problem of the right and correct relationship with food concerns not only the poor, but also the rich. Therefore, all of us are called to strengthen ourselves in the fundamental virtues that are "temperance, moderation, abstinence, self-control and solidarity", to acquire "a lifestyle that will allow us to cultivate a healthy relationship with ourselves, with our brothers and with the environment in which we live" (ibid.).

A virtuous life generates solidarity among peoples and is at the same time the first and highest form of charity that we must live towards ourselves and our brothers.

May the Mother of the Redemption sustain us in our journey and obtain for us a heart free from the pleasures of the flesh and totally oriented to the conquest of eternal beatitude.

Father Raffaele Rimotti

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**JESUS, REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU
COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM
(SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING - Year C)**

YOU SHALL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL (2Sam 5.1.1)

Jesus is not the king with the eternal and universal kingdom, kingdom of justice, peace, truth and love, he is not the Lord of heaven and earth because he constituted himself such and not even because he usurped this very high dignity to others. Jesus is all this by the will of the Father. The Father constituted him and he, through obedience, let himself be constituted. However, this elevation is not without a very high cost. He had to climb so high in the skies through the steps of the cross. In fact, the cross of Jesus is that ladder seen by Jacob that unites the earth to the sky. Jesus goes up to the Father by the way of the cross. Every other disciple of Jesus also goes up to the Father through the way of the cross. For every disciple of Jesus the cross is most pure obedience to the will of the Father according to the perennial motion of the Holy Spirit. If one separates himself from the Spirit of the Lord, he does not climb through the cross of Christ and does not reach the eternal kingdom.

THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM (Col 1,12-20)

Man could live without sun, moon, stars, water, air and food. Never might he live either on earth and or in eternity without Christ, that not only is the eternal principle from which he receives life, but also the end towards which he must strive. Every man has been created through Christ and through Christ he must be redeemed, but he is also created and redeemed in order to conform himself to Christ in life, in death and in glorious resurrection. In creation, everything is for Christ and in view of Christ. Christ is Alpha and Omega, the begin-

ning and end of every being that exists in the universe. It means that there is no fulfillment of the personal being except in Christ, through Christ and with Christ. Today this truth is denied by many disciples of the Lord. It is the sign that we have precipitated into great foolishness. It also means that a separation from Christ the Lord took place in the Christian. He denies Christ who does not live for Christ. Whoever conforms to Christ might never deny him.

TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE (Lk 32.35-43)

What is the way to enter Paradise? The confession of the truth of Jesus. Who is Jesus? He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father who became flesh and came to dwell among us to be our truth, grace, light, eternal life, justice, forgiveness, death and glorious resurrection. Every man is called to be his body and as his true body must accomplish the mystery of his death to be enveloped by his resurrection. One dies the death of Christ to live the resurrection of Christ. The confession of his truth is not purely and simply in the word, it is at the same time confession with the Word and witness with life. The good thief accepts his death in atonement for his punishment, lives the cross as a righteous, as a repentant, confesses the truth of Christ and tomorrow will taste the joy of heaven. On Golgotha the good thief brings his life to fulfillment in Christ. He dies his death as a just person by accepting it as true redemption. He confesses the truth of Christ. He asks Him for the gift of eternal life. The disciple must be crucified with Christ to be resurrected with him.

*by the theologian,
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