

CATANZARO: MUSIC AND EVANGELIZATION

On the occasion of the meeting with the Italian Association of Saint Cecilia, Pope Francis recalls that making music in the Church is a gift from God, but also a way to help make the Christian message understood by those who are far away.

The Pope underlines how sacred music is a "bridge" that brings near and breaks down barriers even with those who do not feel close and reminds that "those who sing pray twice".

The musical event of evangelization held by Fr Franco Bruno and Fr Biagio Maimone took place on 27 December in the parish of St. Mary of the Peace in Catanzaro.

The songs, taken from the new CD "And the angels", published by Fr Franco Bruno himself, gave the opportunity for a reflection on the mystery of Christmas and on its message of hope, to put Jesus and his word back at the centre of the holidays.

With this in mind, the host parish prepared itself for the event with a cycle of catechesis that involved fami-

lies, adults and children, whose main theme was that of corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Fr Franco proposed in detail the history of the birth of each song, inspired by the sacred text and also born from the important contribution of the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement.

The presentation of Fr Flavio Placida started from the memory of the common pastoral mission that saw him, like Fr Biagio and Fr Franco, parish priest of the community of St Mary of the Peace, and then stressed how art and music are admirable instruments for the new evangelization and for the cultural and spiritual elevation of man.

It was a moment of meeting and aggregation of different parishes in the area, with numerous people that accepted the invitation and participated at the event with joy. The engaging spirit of the two parish priests, who introduced each song with a brief catechesis on its evangelical meaning and then actively involved the assembly in the animation, creating an evocative atmosphere, was particularly relevant.

A group of young people from the parish also vivified the evening through dances and the live representation of the nativity.

Enchanted spectators have experienced how music raises the heart in an incessant praise to heaven, speaks a universal language and thus manifests the "beauty of God".

Gabriella Benincasa



Get converted, because the kingdom of heaven is near

There are only two ways that every man can run through and lead to eternity: that of light or the other one of darkness, the narrow or the wide ones. The way of light or the narrow way leads to blessed eternity. The one of darkness or broad one ends up in perdition. The Lord, the Creator, the living and true God calls to run through the narrow way or the way of light. We walk in his Word, we obey his will and we reach his home in heaven. Satan, the Devil, the enemy of man, tempts and seduces so that the other way is run through, that of rebellion against the Law of the Lord, of disobedience to the Commandments, and of detachment from every Statute given by God to man, so that the way to darkness or eternal fire is smoothed out. The servants of the Lord work to call every man so that he walks on the way of light, showing how it is traveled. The ministers of Satan or of the Devil work so that we remain or return to the path of eternal perdition. They too show how it must be lived.

For our eternal redemption and salvation, the Father sends his Only Begotten Son. He becomes a true man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He begins his ministry of proclamation by calling every man to conversion. The kingdom of heaven is near and one can enter it only through conversion. It is not a matter of moral conversion. The kingdom comes in its fullness of truth and grace and it must be accepted. This is conversion. It is a true theological or messianic conversion. We welcome the kingdom by converting ourselves to the truth of the kingdom and to

the morality that springs from its truth. But also the kingdom is welcomed by welcoming the King of this kingdom who comes that is Christ the Lord. Therefore, it is an issue of a true Christological conversion. We welcome Christ, his Word, his way, the road indicated by Him, we enter the kingdom of heaven and we walk towards eternal bliss. We do not welcome Christ, we remain in the old kingdoms, these are no longer the way to eternal salvation. It is a truth that today must be shouted out to every disciple of Christ Jesus, who is proposing other paths for salvation.

In truth, other ways of true salvation have not been given to man. The way is only one, as only one is truth and life: Christ Jesus. If the Christian announces other ways of salvation, not only does he deny Christ the Lord before men and exclude himself from eternal salvation, but he also deprives man of the gift that God has given him so that he can be saved, justified, redeemed and sanctified. No one is allowed to say what God has not said, to offer what God has not offered, to indicate ways that God has not indicated, manifested and revealed. Faithfulness to God is faithfulness to his gift of salvation. Faithfulness to his gift of salvation is love for every man. For those who lose themselves, the Christian becomes eternally responsible if he has failed to announce the whole truth about Christ and his kingdom. Mother of the Redemption ensure that we never deny Christ, by losing us Heaven and arranging that many others lose it.

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Movimento Apostolico

Non-profit Apostolic Movement Weekly.
Free distribution. Publisher: Apostolic Movement
Responsible Director: Costantino Di Bruno.

With ecclesiastical approval of the
Archbishopric Curia of Catanzaro-Squillace.

Authorization no. 75 of 8-2-1990 of the Court of Lamezia Terme.
Directorate, Editorial, Administration: Via B.Musulino, 23/E, Catanzaro.

Internet: www.movimentoapostolico.it
e-mail: info@movimentoapostolico.it

Printed by the press office of the Apostolic Movement

PEACE: PRECIOUS ASSET TO BE GUARDED AND DEFENDED

Reflections starting from the Message of H.H. Francis for the LIII World Day of Peace (1.1.2020)

On the occasion of the LIII World Day of Peace, Pope Francis reminded everyone that peace is a precious asset, which must be guarded and defended every day. He also notes that for this good men must be willing to bear and overcome even the most difficult obstacles, since the human community bears in its memory and flesh the signs of wars, which have always proved to be a fratricide that destroys the plan to fraternity inscribed in the vocation of the human family.

Pope Francis notes that "international peace and stability are incompatible with any attempt to build on fear of mutual destruction or on a threat of total annihilation; they are possible only starting from a global ethics of solidarity and cooperation at the service of a future shaped by interdependence and co-responsibility in the entire human family of today and tomorrow" (Message).

Further on, the Holy Father takes up a theme dear to him, that of the human family or of the common home: "Then, how to build a path of peace and mutual recognition? How to break the morbid logic of threat and fear? How to break the currently prevailing dynamic of mistrust? We must pursue a real brotherhood, based on the common origin from God and exercised in dialogue and mutual trust. The desire for peace is deeply inscribed in the heart of man and we must not resign ourselves to anything less than this" (ibid.).

In light of the experience of his last trip to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Pope suggests a journey made of listening to me-

mory, solidarity and fraternity, coordinates that can guarantee lasting peace over time. This path will be possible if you abandon the spiral of hatred and revenge and embrace the logic of forgiveness and human brotherhood. The Pope takes as an example the Gospel episode in which Jesus tells Peter that we must always forgive: "The path of reconciliation calls us to find in the depths of our hearts the strength of forgiveness and the ability to recognize ourselves as brothers and sisters. Learning to live in forgiveness increases our ability to become women and men of peace" (ibid.).

To safeguard peace, another element is the common itinerary that all men on the "planet or common house" must make towards an "ecological conversion". We must change the behaviors and ways of operating conducted so far, such as the exploitation of natural resources seen as useful tools only for profit, disrespect for local communities, for the common good and for nature itself. The planet welcomes us all, and gives everyone the necessary elements for survival free of charge. This awareness must start in all "conversion, understood in an integral way, as a transformation of the relationships we have with our sisters and brothers, with other living beings, with creation in its very rich variety and with the Creator who is origin of all life" (ibid.).

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace, enlighten and accompany us, to build a better world.

Father Vincenzo Moniaci

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

THE PEOPLE WHO SIT IN THE DARKNESS
(III SUNDAY O.T. - YEAR A)

YOU HAVE BROUGHT THEM ABUNDANT JOY (Is 8,23b-9,3)

Joy is true new creation made by God in the heart of man. Our God comes, frees, redeems, saves, guards, protects and leads us into the truth of our being of creatures made in his image and likeness. Thus the prophet Isaiah: "You have broken the yoke that oppressed him, the bar on his shoulders and the stick of his tormentor." The people is in hard slavery. The Lord comes down with power and frees it, brings it back to its land. Joy is created in the heart. If the Lord does not come, does not free and does not create our truth, never might there be true joy, because it is the fruit in us of the Almighty God and Lord. The Gospel is joy not because it is announced, but because those who proclaim it do what they say: they liberate, save and create the new man in Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit. If our new creation is not made, never might there be joy because true joy is new creation.

IN THE SAME MIND AND IN THE SAME PURPOSE (1Cor 1,10-13,17)

St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians so that they live in perfect union of thought and feeling. In order for this perfect union to be possible it is necessary that everyone denies himself in his will, in his thoughts, in his heart, in his mind and in all his feelings and takes on the thoughts and feelings of Christ. Jesus' disciple must live with one law: the gospel. One heart: that of Christ the Lord. One will: that of the Heavenly Father. One truth: the one to which the Holy Spirit leads day by day. The union of the Lord's disciples can only

happen if we dwell in Christ Jesus and walk in the conduction and motion of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is urgent to rise in denial and obedience. With denial we strip ourselves of what is ours. With obedience we assume what belongs to God. The more we deny ourselves and the more we obey. The less you deny yourself and the less you obey.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM (Mt 4,12-23)

Jesus' mission is manifold and is summarized in the Gospel according to Matthew in four verbs: to travel, teach, announce, heal: "Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all sorts of diseases and infirmity in the people ". Jesus goes to meet man, goes to where he lives, operates, works and suffers. However, he goes as Messiah of the Lord, his envoy and his servant, to say and do what the Father commands him in his Holy Spirit. This is the substantial difference with us. We go but in our name, by our will. We do not go as sent by God to build his kingdom in hearts. Jesus went, taught, announced the kingdom and made it manifest by healing. We go but we don't teach and we don't even manifest the beauty of the kingdom of God. Today we want an outgoing Church. However, the man of God, sent by him to do his will, does not come out. The man who speaks in his name and acts by his will comes out. He does not teach or announce the kingdom, nor does he manifest it present among men.

by the theologian,
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