

FAITH AND LITERATURE - C.S. LEWIS: A PILGRIM FOND OF MEETING THE TRUE GOD

Hearing the name of Clive Staples Lewis, many will ask themselves bewildered: "Who is this?". If they were told that he is the author of the Chronicles of Narnia, a fantastic literary saga transformed into a film, they would exclaim: "Ah, ok!", always asking themselves: "What does this have to do with a Christian training magazine?". If you have the patience to read, the questions and concerns will be answered.

In The ways of the Pilgrim, Lewis describes his intellectual and spiritual itinerary, in these terms: "From an intellectual point of view, my personal progress started from "popular realism", to philosophical idealism; from Idealism to Pantheism; from pantheism to theism; and from Theism to Christianity". His "return" to Christianity - as he intended his conversion - began during the First World War with the discovery of Chesterton's work, it continued with the knowledge in 1926 of Tolkien, author of the "Lord of the Rings", and came to maturity in 1929. In Surprised by Joy, the autobiography written after the conversion, he states: «During the Trinity quarter of 1929 I surrendered, I admitted that God was God and I knelt down to pray: that night, I was perhaps the most desperate and reluctant convert in England. Then I did not notice what is so patent clear today: the humility with which God is ready to welcome a convert even under these conditions. At least,

the prodigal son had returned home with his own feet."

At the time when Lewis lived and worked, a systematic and deleterious action was perpetrated from within Christianity aimed at diminishing the Christian faith. And so, after having fought Christianity for years, Lewis had to "surrender" to the evidence of the evangelical "facts", and without any embarrassment - indeed, quite the opposite - he declared frankly that "Christianity is, if false, of no importance and, if true, of infinite importance. But it cannot be of little importance anyway", warning his interlocutors that "he who marries the spirit of the time will soon find himself a widower".

On the basis of such a belief in faith, he opposed the unsubstantial Christ preached by modernist and liberal theologians, who had deeply undermined faith in the divinity of Christ, denying it, throwing scandal among the simple faithful. In the book Christianity as it is, a collection of conferences held on the radio, he translated the heart of the Christian faith into simple language, without denying, but rather affirming, even the smallest fragment of Gospel Truth. In the conference "Excuse me, which is your God?", he says: "I am here trying to prevent anyone who says the truly absurd thing that is often said about Jesus: "I am ready to accept Jesus as a great teacher of morality, but I don't accept his claim to be God." This is the thing we should not say. A man who had been a simple man and who had said the things Jesus said, would not have been a great teacher of morality. [...] He didn't mean to be it."

Then, here is the first teaching that Lewis offers: trusting God and his Word, believing in the divinity of the Son, in the truth of the Incarnation, of Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Father Massimo Cardamone

(This focus on C.S. Lewis will continue with two other articles dedicated to him soon)

From Life, the truth and the path

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"; but can we also affirm that Jesus is the Life, the Truth and the Way? If so, in what sense? I will try to give the expression of Jesus a pastoral reading.

Having inverted the terms that manifest the identity of Jesus in itself and for us is no coincidence. In the Prologue of his Gospel, the apostle John already expresses the relationship between life and light (truth), in that, life was in the Word and life was the light (truth) of men (1,4). And more, to indicate that Jesus is the only life of God and the only mediator, through whom divine life can be shared and given to men, John confirms the same meaning contained in the Prologue, in the episode of the resurrection of Lazarus, in which being the resurrection and life are distinctive of Jesus the Lord (11.25-26).

I have often heard a simple yet profound interpretation of the expression through which Jesus defines himself. This affirmation expresses the simplicity that springs from a heart that loves the Lord; therefore, it becomes a manifestation of that scientia amoris (love science) capable of opening minds and hearts, even before the highest revelations of the mystery of Christ: Jesus is the Way that leads to the Father, to Salvation. He is the Life that saves us from sin. He is the Truth, because, with our conversion, we bring to the world wisdom, knowledge and the total gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Life that saves man from sin and, consequently, also from his only great enemy: death. Jesus is Life for he is the only

one that comes from the bosom of the Father and thus the only one that possesses and can communicate it fully. From the disciple's perspective, Jesus being the full Life is also the Truth and Way of every man. In these days, we are still contemplating the mystery of Jesus' resurrection; his passage from death to life marked the beginning of the new humanity with the gift of the Spirit, and every disciple receives the Life of Christ in the Spirit, through this new birth from above. Having passed from death to life, from sin to grace and from a world far from God to the one of God, the disciple manages to see and read the Truth and Life of Jesus in the Spirit, as his own truth and the only Way able of directing the existence of the believer to the meeting and communion with the Father.

It is very hard, if not impossible, to see Jesus as the Truth and Way of every man, if He does not participate us in his life, from which we see Christ and his mystery, man and his mystery precisely from the light of God, therefore not as dead but living, not as buried but risen persons. This path reminds a little of the experience of the ancient people of the covenant, who first gained the experience of the liberating and saving God, then, to believe and profess his being creator of man and of all things.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, support and strengthen in us the new life that the mercy of God, in Jesus the Lord, wanted to participate us in being his true children and always staying with him.

Father Flavio Placida

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DIVINE MERCY, THE GIFT OF LIFE

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis on the Feast of Divine Mercy (19.4.2020)

Commenting on the Divine Mercy Feast Gospel, Pope Francis says: "Last Sunday we celebrated the resurrection of the Master, today we are witnessing the resurrection of the disciple". He refers to the unbelieving Thomas who, upon seeing and listening to pierced and risen Jesus, feeling loved by him, turns to him with his profession of faith: "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28).

What is Divine Mercy? It is the infinite love of God that gives life to man creating him and, after sin, recreating by resurrecting him. Man is soul, spirit and body; mercy is giving or restoring life to the soul, spirit and body; every man is constituted by God to be his instrument of mercy.

In this time of corona virus pandemic, let us think on how fundamental the gift of life to the body through treatment, the painstaking remediation of the environments, the research of scientists, the production and transport of devices for therapies and prevention, the wise decisions of those who govern and so on, are. Let us think on the gift of life to the spirit by means of consolation, comfort, the gift of the Word of Jesus which is truth that arouses or raises faith, hope and love. But man is also soul; it needs to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus, but many times it also needs to be resurrected. Precisely on Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church meditates on the Gospel in which risen Jesus appears to the disciples and constitutes them life givers to the soul through sacramental forgiveness:

"Jesus (...) breathed on them and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained"" (Jn 20: 21-23). In times not very remote to us, revealing himself to the holy Polish nun Faustina Kowalska, Lord Jesus reminds and vigorously proposes again the offer of this gift of life in the gift of His mercy, which is the heart of the whole Gospel and also the reason for the institution of this feast:

"My daughter, speaks to the whole world of My inconceivable Mercy. I wish the feast of Mercy to be a shelter and refuge for all souls and especially for poor sinners. On that day the bowels of My Mercy are opened, I will pour a whole sea of graces on the souls who approach the source of My Mercy. The soul that approaches confession and Holy Communion receives total forgiveness of guilt and punishment (...). Let no soul be afraid to approach Me, even if its sins were like scarlet (...). The feast of Mercy has come out of My bowels; I wish it to be celebrated solemnly on the first Sunday after Easter". "Even if a soul were decomposing like a corpse and humanly there was no possibility of resurrection and everything was lost, it would not be so for God: a miracle of Divine Mercy will resurrect this soul in all its fullness" (S. Faustina, Diary)

May the Mother of the Redemption help every man welcome and in turn give the mercy of God!

Father Orlando Amelio

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**MASTER, SHOW US THE FATHER,
AND THAT WILL BE ENOUGH FOR US n. 19
(V Easter Sunday Year A)**

TO PRAYER AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD (Acts 6: 1-7)

In the body of Christ, everyone can ask the other to be what the other might never be, either by vocation, or by charisma, or by ministry, or by immediate command of the Spirit of God, but when asked what is contrary to what has been ordained from above, we must immediately abandon all obedience. Peter and the Apostles were sent by Christ the Lord, in the Holy Spirit, to preach the Word, sowing it in every heart. This is their mission. They must also pray for the Spirit to fertilize their proclamation, turning it into conversion and fullness of faith. They cannot take care of tables. Peter also teaches us that it is always possible to create new mandates, which are required by the multiple needs of the community. Thus every celestial command is respected and also the body of Christ is served in truth and grace. It is of the Spirit of the Lord to suggest new ministries for new needs.

A STONE THAT WILL MAKE PEOPLE STUMBLE AND FALL (1Pt 2,4-9)

Whoever receive Christ is edified as the temple of God in Him. For who does not let himself be conquered by the Holy Spirit, Jesus, the Crucified, becomes a stumbling stone and a stone of scandal. Only who is not in the Spirit of God can say that the Lord will eventually envelop all of us with his mercy and we will all be stones in his home. Because deprived of all divine wisdom, we do not understand that the Father's mercy is precisely the gift of Christ Crucified, in whom and from whom our eternal redemption is. We do not accept Christ Crucified, we die in our sins.

Rather Christ Jesus will become a stumbling stone and stone of scandal for eternity. The gates of hell open wide. We are false witnesses of Christ and of God, because we are against the Holy Spirit, we devastate the truth of God which is Jesus Christ and destroy Christ Crucified that is the mercy and grace of the Father for our eternal redemption.

WHOEVER HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER (Jn 14: 1-12)

We can assert that Jesus is on our earth the heart, life, holiness of the Father manifested to us in all their splendour of grace, truth, light, mercy, compassion, wisdom, knowledge, intelligence and love. In his flesh Jesus Christ reveals all the omnipotence of the goodness of the Father. In Christ is the whole Father who works the same way that the Father has worked with Adam when he created him. That is why Jesus can say, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." If the Father himself were to act, he could not do different or bigger, more holy or more striking and extraordinary things. Indeed, in Christ Crucified, the Father has done something that He might never even do: "Dying for the love of his creatures." The Father might always show his omnipotence of grace, truth, justice, holiness, mercy and charity, but he might never die for man. Death for love is only of the Son. But the Father is as if he died in the Son, for the Son is all his life. Between the love of the Father and the love of Christ and every other virtue of Christ and virtue of the Father there is no difference.

by the theologian,

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