

IN PRAYER... AS A CHILD AND A MOTHER

I've always prayed since I have remembrance of it. I think my parents and grandparents taught me that. The sign of the cross, Hail Mary and Our Father. As a child the clerical sisters made us recite the Act of Pain every morning and in May the Long live Mary was sung in front of her statue adorned with flowers.

But I learned real praying, I mean praying with the heart, later. After having met you.

On Monday my family took me to church. I sat next to my grandmother, touching the marble of the balustrade, and I looked at you through the white columns. I observed your praying, looking at the Our Lady with the face full of light.

That day I had no desire to pray, to recite the Holy Rosary. My mind was distracted, but your face, your lips hardly touching on an already mentioned smile, made me wish to be with Jesus as you were. "You are not alone, there is Jesus with you, the Virgin Mary and all of Heaven". I learned from you, Maria, to pray every time I listened to your words from Monday to Monday. They were words of love, truth and encouragement to spur and to remind with our life that Jesus loves us.

I listened to your words with all my body, Maria. My heart beat fast with emotion and I was moved to hear how you spoke of Jesus, how you turned to him. What a beautiful dialogue was born from that heavenly bright

gaze!

Praying wasn't just saying prayers, however beautiful and complete they may be. Praying meant entering into the intimacy of the soul and revealing the personal self his identity without hypocrisy and his own lowliness before the immense love of Heaven.

I learned from you, Maria, how to pray while the music and singing resonated with the angels from your silences and from your mouth and pure joy of true love flooded your face. You made prayer a constant, remaining in the simplicity of daily affairs.

That Monday from the balustrade I also looked at the Our Lady and I asked her with my heart in hand to change my thoughts, to drive away my restlessness and anxiety and to help me be a better being. I was little more than a child.

I learned from you Maria. You know... my daughter likes to sing. You always hear her singing some known or invented tune by her at the spare of the moment.

It makes her and also my heart happy. I look at her with eyes shining with love and thank heaven for having her next to me. My thoughts go to Her, the Mother of all mothers. As I perform the gestures of daily management of domestic life, even with no little physical and mental fatigue, I wonder: who knows if she too got tired while cleaning, cooking, cradling and feeding. I fancy about what her daily routine could be like at home... with God.

We pray together, my daughter and I, while the little child smiles. We pray while we make the bed and in singing songs we choose the nicest ones for you Jesus and Our Lady. And in the singing done with the heart I hand over my whole self to you, because only you can and know my nights. The day becomes brighter and the hours ahead shorter. In our song for you Maria.

Daniela Di Pinto



He spoke to them at length in parables

Why did Jesus speak in parables? It is a question that all commentators and exegetes have focused on, from Christian antiquity to the present day.

It is not enough to consider the need for didactic simplification, which Jesus met, using languages and images within the reach of the audience of his time. Of course, the literary genre of the parables allowed immediate access to all listeners, so that in the Spirit they could grasp a first intuitive perception of the message of Jesus and feel his closeness, his interest in humble people and the power of attraction that came from the depth of his person through words. The crowds were conquered when the Master sat down and handed them the mystery of God.

Yet while parables revealed something with simplicity, they let notice that much else remained hidden and incomprehensible. And it was Jesus himself who wanted to leave out of explicit words the most direct and profound content of his parables, which however, was not denied to his disciples: "Without parables he did not speak to them but, in private, to his own disciples he explained everything" (Mk 4.34). Thus, there was also an understandable need for prudence, which Jesus adopted wisely, in order not to let his direct language on certain themes give the leaders of the people the pretext to accuse him ahead of time, or be exploited by the man who hardens so as not to listen and get converted (Mt 13: 13-15). But even this motivation is not enough on its own, to understand the preference of parabolic discourse over direct, explicit and structured statements.

Parables are rather a form entirely appropriate to the most intimate and profound nature of the revelation that takes place in Christ. He is the image of the invisible God, St. Paul will say (Col 1:15). He is the Word made flesh, the Only Begotten Son, the one who reveals the God that no one has ever seen (Jn 1:14, 18). Whoever has seen Him has seen the Father (Jn 14: 9). Therefore, the Father's revelation cannot be "contained" within words, concepts, logical structures and human argumentative processes. Whoever tries to "enclose" God in theological schemes and catalogued and organized systems of ideas, might never imprison the overwhelming and divine vitality of the Word. Entrusted to the Church and officially attested by Scripture, It always transcends

the letter and is always made new and current by the Spirit.

Then, the tension is not between language for images and categorical language. But between letter and Spirit. Between the ambition of possessing the Word and the humility of serving the Word. Listening, prayer, contemplation, meditation, together with study and a great deal of willingness to confrontation, are certainly needed, at the service of the Word, in order to be able to live, understand, witness and teach it. And so, in humility, even the human structures of understanding and knowing are called into question and valued by the Word of Jesus.

May the Virgin Mary grant us her help, to imitate her in opening our heart and mind, so that we disciples can also put ourselves at the service of the Word of her Son.

Sac. Francesco Brancaccio

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UNITY AND PROPHECY

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul (29.6.2020)

In his homily for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis focused on two key words: unity and prophecy.

On the first word, unity, he highlighted the characteristics of the two apostles: "Peter was a fisherman who spent the days between the oars and the nets, Paul a cultured Pharisee who taught in synagogues". Two people different from each other, but what bound them both was the unshakable bond with Christ, the One who "unites, without levelling us. He unites us in differences". Unity is founded not on the basis of a generic or ideological link but essentially on what, indeed, on Someone who gives true meaning to life. This Someone is Jesus Christ.

The theme "unity" was further examined by the Pope with a brief reference to the first reading. Before the tragic moment of Peter's arrest, the people remained united in prayer. The text says that "a prayer for him incessantly rose from the Church" (Acts 12.5). Unity is a principle that is activated above all with prayer, because it "allows the Holy Spirit to intervene, to open up to hope, to shorten distances and to keep us together in difficulties".

Many times we find ourselves in situations where, due to difficulties, we are led to discouragement, despair or railing against someone. This passage from Acts teaches us that it is precisely in these difficult moments that we must seek the path of unity, putting the selves in communion of prayer with others. Here is the Christian faith: believing that by the power of God "many doors that separate would open, many chains that paralyze would fall", just as the chains were broken and the prison doors opened, making Peter free.

The second key word is "prophecy". It is a gift that comes from God and, as such, He asks that it be put at the service of the Church and history. Both Peter and Paul let themselves be provoked by Christ. Peter recognizes Jesus as the Son of the living God and Jesus entrusts him with the power to be his Vicar on earth: "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18). Thus Paul, once called by Christ, on the road to Damascus, sees himself and Christ in a totally different way. He is recognized by Christ as "the instrument I have chosen for myself, so that he may carry my name before the nations" (Acts 9:15).

Therefore, prophecy arises when one reverses his own way of thinking and living. As the Pope says: "It is not born from my thoughts, it is not born from my closed heart. It is born if we let ourselves be provoked by God". Against this background, the Pope strongly emphasized that today there is "a need for prophecy, but for true prophecy: not of word makers who promise the impossible, but of witnesses that make the Gospel possible". With this he wanted to broaden the horizon of meaning of the word prophecy, also referring to the prophetic connotation that derives from baptism. Prophets are also all Christians who build the good with their testimony. No words are needed to change history, if anything, but service to the "Word", making us all announcers and witnesses of the truth of the Gospel, spending ourselves on our brothers and sisters.

May the Mother of Redemption enlighten us to know how to live unity in the difference of gifts and prophecy through the service to the Church and history, every day.

Father Alessandro Carioti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

JULY 12, 2020 - ROMAN RITE SUNDAY
THE SEED SOWN ON RICH SOIL
(XV SUNDAY O. T. YEAR A)

IT SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME VOID
(Is 55: 10-11)

Every word that the Lord gives to man is most pure grace of salvation. If man hears, gets converted and obeys, he enters into life contained or promised by it. However, if he does not listen to it, because he is deaf or indifferent, he remains in his death, but the Lord is no longer responsible of it. Today, not only is the Word modified, transformed, altered and changed in its original truth, it is also taught that it is irrelevant to redemption. Whether you listen or not listen, obey or not obey, eternal salvation is for everyone. This false faith and false doctrine on the Word is the summit of idolatry today. Having taken the truth away from the Word of God, having declared it no more unique and only foundation of the path of salvation, every word of man can take its place. Through the prophet the Lord speaks with complete honesty to his people: listen to the Word and you live. Do not listen and you die.

CREATION WAS MADE SUBJECT
TO FUTILITY (Rm 8,18-23)

Because of his disobedience, man has evaded the will of his Lord. The consequences are a real disaster. Not only does he use himself, his body, his spirit and his soul for evil, he uses all of creation for evil and no longer for good. Creation rebels against this wicked, bad use of death the man subjugated it to and yearns to be creation only for good, for life and for salvation. It is tired of being distorted in its original purpose. From a creation for good to a creation for evil, from a work for life to a work for death. Today we can assert that there is a

culture of devastating death. If the man does not return to his Lord, does not let himself be brought back by Christ Jesus into his truth of origin, there is no possibility that creation can return to being only at the service of life. The man who is in death will use it to give death.

A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW
(Mt 13: 1-23)

The Word is sown, the kingdom is born. The Word is not sown, no Kingdom of God might ever emerge on our land. Since all are called to become the kingdom of God, the Word must be given to everyone. Everybody will have to listen to it. Seeders of the Word are the Apostles and, in hierarchical communion of obedience to their teaching and to their Word, all believers in Christ. To the seeder the obligation to sow all the Word to everyone, always. The fruit does not depend on his work. He gives the pure Word, in heavenly truth, just as it come out of the heart of Christ and the Holy Spirit, then the man will be the one to have to make it fructify. Jesus tells us that if the seed falls on the road, on stony ground or covered with thorns, it does not produce fruit. It fructifies only if it lands on the good ground. But even on good soil it does not produce the same fruit. It now produces thirty, now sixty and now one hundred folds more. Sowing the Word, the responsibility of every single person begins. But if the seeder does not sow, or sows the Word in an altered or imperfect way, responsibility is his before God.

by the theologian,
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