

FROM TRAINING TO ACTION

Like many of those who read this newspaper, I have participated in the life of the parish since childhood. I have been attending catechism and catechesis for decades by now and I think that formation in the Gospel of Christ according to the Magisterium and the Tradition of the Church are fundamental, they are a necessary condition for the path of spiritual growth of every Christian. How can one proclaim, bear witness to the Word of God, if he does not know it?

Being trained to form and educated to educate. However, in my journey of faith, I realized that if formation is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient condition for a Christian. Formation must be followed by our mission, which everyone carries out according to his own charisma and following the charisma of the Group, Movement or Association of which he may possibly be a part of within the Church.

That is, formation and listening do not represent the end, but the beginning of missionary work. They are the bases and foundations from which every missionary action must start.

Training serves for action; if it remains an end in itself, it becomes sterile and produces no fruit. Today, more than ever, the world needs true, authentic and reliable witnesses, it needs to be able to reflect itself in the other.

However, it is not enough to know the Word of God in order not to transgress it, we must make it evident in us, in our daily actions, embodying it and showing it to everyone through our works. On the other hand, not the fear of hell does save us but love for God. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that we will be judged on love ("I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you dressed me, sick and you visited me, imprisoned and you came to see me", Mt 25,35-6) and the Gospel of John gives us the new commandment of love ("I give you a new commandment: that you love one another. As I have loved you, you also love one another. By this they will all know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another", Jn 13: 34-5). If not sinning is the first step, loving is the second, for a path of fullness. The first step places us in compliance with the Law, in the commandments; the second takes us directly to the heart of Christ Jesus' message, the Beatitudes.

On the other hand, the lives of the saints tell us just this, a great love for Christ that becomes salvation for the brothers. Above all, they tell of an immense multitude of different ways of loving God and our brothers and sisters, because each of us goes, saves and converts according to his own charisma, a unique and unrepeatable gift for the Church and all of humanity.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, the Apostolic Movement was born from your heart, a gesture of love and mercy for this humanity plagued by evil. Make us authentic witnesses of the Word of your Son Jesus in the world, so that following the example of our Inspirer, we too can go, save and convert without ever getting tired.

Maria Primo



The Canaanite woman's faith

In the New Testament the episodes that highlight the faith of pagan men and women or of people labeled as enemies of God are not few. It suffices thinking of the Roman centurion, who with deep faith in the Lord asks for the healing of his servant who is about to die; or of the centurion Cornelius, who abounds in works of justice and charity and therefore is acceptable to God; as well as of the good Samaritan, who, although considered as an enemy of the people of God, lives fraternal charity towards a victim attacked by brigands, with great freedom and love. Therefore, pagans and enemies, who present themselves before Jesus and men in an exemplary way, living according to great faith and sincere charity, to the point that the catechesis, reflection and liturgy of the Church present them as models of Christian life to be imitated and followed.

The passage of Mt 15.21-28, in which it is told of a Canaanite woman, therefore a pagan, who approaches Lord Jesus to ask him some particularly important thing, reveals something profoundly extraordinary. Jesus goes to whereabouts of Tiro and Sidon, notoriously pagan cities, and there a woman forcefully asks him for the release of her daughter, tormented by a demon. Jesus' attitude immediately appears unusual, since he responds, in a certain sense, with a threefold refusal: "But he did not even speak to her" ... "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" ... "It is not good to take the personal children's bread and throw it to the dogs". The three answers put a strain on the woman's faith and her maternal love; ne-

vertheless, at the same time, they bring out her humility, intelligent insistence, ability to argue and above all her faith in Jesus, recognized and confessed as the One who, in God, can work much more than her mother's heart dares to hope. In the end, the woman's intelligent and loving faith is rewarded: "Woman, your faith is truly great ... let it be done to you as you wish." The healing of the daughter tormented by the devil is achieved and yet she always remains a Canaanite, pagan woman, not belonging to the people of the covenant, however, benefited by such a great intervention of the power of Jesus Christ.

It is evident that these differences are often made by the bias judgments of men, since as Peter affirms, "God does not make preferences of people, but whoever fears him and practices justice, to whatever people he belongs is accepted by him" (Acts 10:34 -35). Nevertheless, the fact remains valid that the call to belong to the people of God is desirable and universal. Once again a pagan is presented as a model of faith to be imitated. Let us reflect: what feelings would one of us have if he, a believer, presented a request for grace to the Lord and received three refusals? Almost certainly sorrow, despair and even despair: "The Lord has abandoned me, there is no more salvation for me". We often say so. But Jesus knows how to speak to the heart, he knows how to heal and save them. We must learn how to ask, have faith and love. At the school of a "pagan" we can improve.

Father Flavio Placida

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THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, "MY GOD", THE GOD OF MY PERSONAL HISTORY

*Reflections starting from the catechesis cycle
of H.H. Francis on prayer / 5 (3 June 2020)*

The experience a man gains of the Transcendent is always the foundation of his way of turning to him to praise, invoke and make requests to him and it could not be otherwise. Faith is always at the origin of man's prayer and the latter is placed within a particular relationship that the person lives with his God.

Abraham's faith is certainly "the faith that becomes history", since, the moment God called him to carry out his particular project, he knew how to surrender himself to his word and, throughout his entire existence, he had the gift of living a relationship of profound intimacy with him. During his life, he always remained faithful to the word of God and the Lord was always with him and close to him, in every moment of his existence. Precisely because of this relationship of great familiarity with the Lord, Abraham lived constantly in dialogue and stood in comparison with God (cf. Gen 15: 1-10; 17: 1-22; 18: 1-33); but his prayer and his continuous "conversing" with God have always had a precise intention for him as a foundation, that of remaining obedient to the divine will: "Abraham, with his life, with his example, teaches us this path, this road on which faith becomes history. God is no longer seen only in cosmic phenomena, as a distant God, who can strike terror. The God of Abraham becomes "my God", the God of my personal history, who guides my steps, who does not abandon me; the God of my days, the companion of my adventures; the God Providence".

The Pope's words give us a very important truth, in order to live prayer in a truer and more intense way: we Christians like Abraham are also called to have a concrete, authentic faith, a faith that becomes history. For me, Jesus cannot remain the "Lord" alone on a theoretical level, but must become "my Lord" in the today of my daily life.

However, for this to happen, a firm decision must be made on my part: trusting, as Abraham did, in him and his word. Faith is trust in the person and the word of Jesus. It is translated into a historical journey in the course of which, always, in every moment and circumstance, Christ is with us, because we are with him: in Sacred Scripture and through the teaching of the apostles (cf. Acts 2:42) the Lord shows us the way of truth and good and we always follow it with trust and humility; we listen to him, we put his words into practice and he always helps us, enlightens us and supports us, even in moments of difficulty or suffering.

If Christ becomes the "God of my personal history", even my invocation will certainly change for the better: the moment I feel Christ closer to me, my prayer will also be characterized by greater intimacy with him, and therefore it will be lived by me in a more intense and heartfelt way.

Therefore, let us ask the Virgin Mary, our Mother, for a "faith that becomes history", and that our invocation may be increasingly more authentic and well accepted by the Lord.

Father Felice Raffaele

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**HAVE PITY ON ME, LORD, SON OF DAVID!
(XX Sunday O. T. Year A)**

**FOREIGNERS WHO JOIN THEMSELVES
TO THE LORD**(Is 56, 1.6-7)

God calls Abraham because through him, in his offspring, he must be recognized and adored as the true God and Lord, the only Creator of every man. Every stranger, who is already the son of God by creation, must become his son through adoration. God makes no distinction between a son of Abraham and a son of Adam, they are all his children by creation. However, every son of Abraham has this very high mission: making the true God be known to every man, inviting him to adhere to Him. Today, this truth must be shouted to the Church. She has been sent to make the whole world and every man, know the true God, the only true God who is the Crucifix. If she does not live this mission, she has no reason to exist. Today, this is the most harmful and devastating self point of reference. The true ruin of the world is the closure of the Church in herself. The Church exists to call the world to God, not to ratify the falsehood of the gods of the world.

**THE GIFTS AND CALL OF GOD ARE
IRREVOCABLE** (Rm 11,13-15,29-32)

The structure of religion has changed with Christ. One is no longer of God by birth from Abraham. He is God's by a personal choice. Christ is preached, the Word is welcomed, one lets himself be baptized and becomes a people of God, in Christ, with Christ and for Christ. This new way of salvation is open to every man. Every man of every nation and language, race, or people can run through this way. Paul says the truth in this. The gifts and the calling of God are ir-

reversible. But the structure of the way to gain access to faith in Christ changes. Everyone is responsible for his call to salvation. No one might decide for the other. The first Christian community is all made up of Abraham's sons. Now it is up to every man and no longer to the people to be converted. Will there be a conversion of all Abraham's children to Christ at one time? For Paul this day will come. When it happens it is in the mystery of God and in the heart of Paul.

WOMAN, GREAT IS YOUR FAITH!
(Mt 15: 21-28)

The Cananean woman is in all like Lazarus, the poor. As This did not want what was above the rich man's table, but only to be treated like a dog: being able to pick some crumbs. Jesus admires the woman's faith and gives her the grace. From this evangelical tale we must learn: insistence in prayer. You never have to give in to the request. We must stop only when grace is granted. Always knowing how to be contented with the crumbs of the grace of Christ the Lord. You do not go to him to ask for everything, but just what is strictly necessary to live. For everything else the Christian knows to carry his cross. One has to ask for others for great love. When we see that the brothers need some crumbs of grace, we must run to the Lord and insistently asking him with great love for them. Prayer that flows from our love for others is always fulfilled. It is perpetually listened to. Praying for love, faith, insistence, never desist or surrendering is the way to obtain all grace.

*by the theologian,
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