

Apostolic Movement: Final report on the service carried out in the Archdiocese of Catanzaro-Squillace - Year XLI - 2019/20 (part 1 of 3)



"People, who do they say the Son of man is?"

The Apostolic Movement, in the Archdiocese of Catanzaro-Squillace, began the new pastoral year 2019/20 with the inauguration of the catechesis which took place on 7 October 2019, in the parish church "Mary Mother of the Church" in St. Ianni in Catanzaro. H.E. Msgr. Vincenzo Bertolone, Metropolitan Archbishop, began the catechetical meetings on the theme "On the way moved by the Holy Spirit", with a Eucharistic Co-celebration, read in the light of the Sunday Gospel. In the same celebration, Msgr. Archbishop welcomed in the public association "Mary Mother of the Redemption" the renewal of the temporary vows of 18 consecrated women and the profession of temporary vows of three novices.

The Archbishop was greeted by Fr Francesco Brancaccio, the diocesan assistant of the Movement, and Anna Guzzi, teacher of novices. Recalling the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Apostolic Movement, found on November 3, 1979 through the Inspirer Maria Marino, Fr Francesco highlighted the undertaken ecclesial journey, reiterating that all the A.M. will persevere under the guidance of his Pastor in the service of Christ and the whole Church. After having addressed a fatherly greeting to the founder, Mrs. Maria Marino, the central assistant Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno, the Priests, the Consecrated Women, the President and all the

faithful present, the Prelate reiterated his gratitude to the Apostolic Movement, recalling its charisma and its being "an ecclesial movement at the service of parishes, the diocese and the whole Church".

From the beginning of the pastoral year, every Monday, the catecheses were held by the Central Assistant, Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno.

The lay consecrated women of the Secular Institute "Mary Mother of the Redemption" animated and offered, on the first Thursday of the month, the Eucharistic Adorations, which took place in the Saint Ianni parish and were led by Fr Domenico Concolino, its spiritual assistant; they also participated together with some members of the Movement in the celebration of the Holy Mass for Consecrated Life on 1 February, in the Immaculate Conception Basilica.

Let us recall some liturgical and pastoral events, organized by the Diocese, the Apostolic Movement participated in:

- Cultural meetings, "Culture dialogues with faith - Maieutikè: between heaven and earth", 9 meetings organized by the Archdiocese, scheduled from October to July;

- Meetings of pastoral workers with the Bishop and mandate to the catechists, in the various Vicar zones of Catanzaro, on 8-9-16-17 in the month of October;

- Mass Animation of St. Barbara, patron saint of the Firemen, on December 4th; Mass for the Armed forces, on 16 December, at the Immaculate Conception Basilica; Mass for the health ministry operators, on 20 December 2019, at the Ciaccio hospital;

- Diocesan March of Peace, January 18, 2020, in Magisano;

- Sunday of the Word, January 19, 2020, 5.30 pm, at Mount of the Dead Church;

- Some cultural meetings organized by the Archdiocese at the St. Petri room and the Immaculate Conception Basilica (it continues)

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This apparently generic question, by way of a survey, is deliberately inserted into a very specific intention on the part of Jesus. Bringing out the common opinion of people about Jesus does not mean to consider it necessarily false, but rather inadequate. It is not entirely false because in the three mentioned prophets, with whom Jesus is identified, somehow an eschatological expectation, a turning point that is accompanied by hope and the perception that something great is about to happen echo. It is inadequate because it contrasts with true discipleship, which requires a following 'to the end', a complete knowledge of the Messiah, which must not be expressed only in words but with faith, in knowing how to share in his own destiny.

Similarly, in our time, the opinion of "the people" may emerge that they have known Jesus and, perhaps, have even studied him scientifically, but have never really and deeply known him in his specificity and in his complete truth. One can remain in a perfect theological and philosophical knowledge of Jesus, but immensely distant from his feelings and from his real thought of truth.

A second similarity concerns the journey of many Christians who have a faith, undoubtedly based on elements of goodness, presuppose important aspects of Christian doctrine and life, but, as regards their knowledge and full adherence to Christ and the Church, they remain on a decidedly weak spiritual level. This mortifies the journey of faith of the individual be-

liever and also weakens the journey of the ecclesial community, because the strength of personal grace which supports the "body" of the church with a mature faith is lacking.

With "opinions" on Christ we can certainly say that we love Jesus, we can also choose him as the ideal of our existence, but what is actually lacking is the vital "experience" with him, without which we remain clinging to fragments of truth and values that do not strongly support our faith and do not guarantee to know the direction and purpose of the personal life.

Peter responds in the name of the Twelve with a confession that clearly differs from the opinion of the people: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". The disciples understand that Jesus does not fit into any of the usual categories of the time and that He is much more than the prophets of history.

After this confession, Jesus attests that it is not the work of "flesh and blood", but comes only from the gift of faith. We must remain in this logic of faith if we want to welcome Jesus as the Saviour of the world. If one comes out of this divine light, unfortunately, he falls into the same error as Peter, in the moment in which he brings the truth expressed about Christ back to his personal interpretation.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, to support us to persevere in the faith, listening to the voice of the Church until the end of our days.

Father Alessandro Carioti

THE STRUGGLE OF PRAYER: HE WHO IS NOT SURE WINS

Reflections starting from the catechesis cycle
of H.H. Francis on prayer / 6 (10 June 2020)

The cycle of catechesis that Pope Francis dedicates to prayer today encounters a mysterious episode, which has often captured the attention of commentators, but always leaving some shadow that is not entirely clear: it is the episode of Jacob's struggle, described in chapter 32 of Genesis. "The spiritual tradition of the Church - the Pope recalls it, quoting the Catechism of the Catholic Church - has seen in this story the symbol of prayer as the fight of faith and the victory of perseverance".

Nevertheless, following this traditional interpretation, the Pope brings some of his original indications of considerable suggestion, which undoubtedly help a fruitful personalization of this biblical reading.

Jacob is described by the Pope as a shrewd, self-confident, tenacious and patient man, skilled in carrying out his projects, even in an unscrupulous way. Far from his land and roots, having escaped the threats of his brother Esau with whom he has always had a conflicting relationship, Jacob got very rich, married his beloved woman and built a large clan around him. Now, after so many years, history brings him back to his homeland and links him with his origins. But before crossing the border of his land, Jacob stops at night along the Jabbok stream and there his securities begin to waver: what will happen to him, his family and his riches when he has to face Esau again?

It is in this moment of fear that the mysterious episode takes place. Suddenly a man appears, with whom Jacob struggles all night, without ever letting go. At dawn,

that man hits Jacob in the sciatic nerve, leaving him definitively limping. But it is in that moment that the sense of the struggle manifests itself: that man asks Jacob for his name and transforms it into Israel ("Because you fought with God and with men and you won!"). Then he blesses him. Jacob realizes that he has seen God face to face and that he is safe.

Jacob will no longer be the man he was before, the Pope comments. He comes out of that struggle with another name, another life and another attitude. His struggle had its meaning and its victory when he no longer felt sure of himself. Afraid of Esau, unable to trust in his shrewdness, weakened even in his body, he became a new person, and his new name definitively reveals him as the heir of God's promises to his Fathers. When Jacob loses his confidence in himself, at that very moment he finally becomes the man God had chosen and called.

Then, this is why Jacob's struggle with God is an image of prayer: an image of insistence, of perseverance, but also of renouncing one's own certainties, so that, with his blessing, the Lord is the one who gives us the path to be followed, which is not necessarily the one we were already sure to take. Those who are sure of themselves will pray to God only to grant them what their heart has already desired and planned, but they will never be open to the surprises of divine mercy. Our security is only God's fidelity to his Word and to his mercy, which is always ready to surprise us.

Father Francesco Brancaccio

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH
(XXI Sunday O.T. Year A)

WHEN HE OPENS, NO ONE SHALL SHUT (Is 22: 19-23)

This is the work of our God: utmost vigilance so that anyone who wants can access the sources of his salvation. This acting of the Lord is his constant in history. A man cannot hinder the path of his light on our land. No one can prevent that his design of love and mercy is destroyed forever. For this God works on two fronts: He removes from the history of salvation its destroyers, raises strong and resolute people, whom He himself guarantees with his divine assistance. If there was no such a constant in God, there would be no salvation for anyone. The powers of darkness and evil would be able to eliminate from our land every trace of divine light. God intervenes, shows his omnipotence, keeps alive the path of his salvation, gives every man the grace of being able to be saved. It is true for all: every branch from the Lord could be cut off from the true vine.

OR WHO HAS BEEN HIS COUNSELOR?
(Rm 11,33-36)

God's ways through which salvation is carried out on our earth are always mysterious, impenetrable and unpredictable. Why the salvation of the pagans must come from the Jews is a mystery. Why the salvation of the Jews must come from Gentiles is also a mystery. But for all, salvation comes through faith in Christ Jesus. The mystery is proclaimed in the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit, poured out by those who announce it and it is welcomed. In the Holy Spirit received in the sacraments of the Church, one understands it. When you are without the Holy Spirit, even if you an-

nounce the Gospel, it is not welcomed. The disciples of Jesus will always have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If they are devoid of him, the Word is without the Spirit. There will be neither acceptance nor subsequent understanding of the mystery. Disciple, Word, Holy Spirit must always be one. There is no life in separation because there is no welcome.

I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (Mt 16: 13-20)

In the Words of Jesus there are "prophecies" and "certainties". Two relate to Peter and two are valid for his Church. The Church of Jesus is only that founded on Peter. "You are Peter, and on this stone I will build my Church." There are no other Churches of Jesus. The other certainty that guarantees this Church is contained in the words: "The gates of hell will not prevail over her." On every other Church, the doors of the hell might prevail. We have the absolute certainty that they will never prevail over the Church based on Peter. We know that Peter is a foundation, but he is not the only one. He is the visible foundation. The invisible foundation is Christ Jesus. The third foundation, according to Paul, is the prophets and the Apostles. The second prophesied certainty about Peter is his key power. He can loosen and tie. What He dissolves, is dissolved in the heavens. What He binds is bound in heaven. It is a power conferred in the Holy Spirit to always exercise in the Holy Spirit. On this certainty, every son of the Church founded upon Peter must raise the building of his faith.

by the theologian,
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno