

Consecrated lay people: at the center of the tension of the modern soul (part 2)

It continues from the preceding article

The great forces that govern the world: politics, mass media, science, technology, culture, education, industry and work are precisely the fields where lay people have the specific competence to carry out their mission. If these forces are directed by people who are true disciples of Christ and who, at the same time, for their knowledge and talents, are competent in their specific fields, then the world will truly be changed from within by the redemptive power of the Christ (John Paul II, homily delivered in Limerick, October 1, 1979, quoted in *Changing the world from within*. Address to the II International Congress of Secular Institutes, August 28, 1980, the underlined in the text is mine).

A consecrated lay person can work in any area, but he must do it as an authentic disciple of Christ, combining commitment, skills and talents with the power of grace. He was not called to be sloppy and mediocre. In fact, lack of competence is not only a knowledge gap, but it is translated into the impossibility of being the charity of Christ. Only competence, illuminated by the Word of God, made fruitful by humil-

ity and poverty in spirit, allows to truly help others, even if only by giving those deep eyes that intercept the true needs of the brother. For John Paul II, consecration itself becomes a discerning factor of the secular state, that is, a spiritual compass that allows to separate positive from negative potential, enhancing the former and discarding the latter. This means that open-mindedness is an essential attitude, constitutive for the consecrated lay person. The world must also be taken seriously:

Therefore, you must consider yourself as a "part" of the world, as committed to sanctifying it, totally accepting its needs that derive from the legitimate autonomy of the world realities, its values and its laws (J. Paul II, *Changing the world from within* cit., n.14).

The world must be sanctified, but it has a legitimate autonomy. It is necessary to gradually seek solutions to the practical problems that emerge, knowing that faith does not give pre-packaged solutions. Thus, the consecrated lay person will succeed in his mission if he maintains a high sense of the church and of communion with the Pastors, a theological existence and a contemplative dimension. The last two allow one to always breathe the transcendent presence of the Lord and give the freedom that, even in the tempests of life or, simply, among the tight rhythms of daily and professional occupations, he knows how to find islands of active prayer and of listening to his own Lord. Because only by listening to the breath of the heart of Christ does one not lose the spirit of the personal consecration.

Anna Guzzi



Do not be afraid!

Matthew chapter 10 reports the missionary discourse of Jesus. After having called his disciples to have them stay with him, linked to his own life, he sends them to continue his work in favour of men. The mission is the essence of their and the Church's life; therefore, the Lord instructs them on it, explaining them what it is, how it is accomplished, what it entails and the dangers and difficulties to which the missionaries are exposed, reassuring them of his continuous presence on their path.

Jesus loves his envoys, they are precious in his and in all of Heaven's eyes. If, in his providence, the Father guards the birds of heaven in their integrity, how much more will he have his watchful eye on the disciples of his Son: "You are worth more than many sparrows." Hence the reassurance of Jesus to his followers: "Do not be afraid!"

The disciples are called to carry out their mission in a "world" marked by uncertainties, contradictions, difficulties and persecutions due to the Word and its overwhelming force. The evangelizing mission is exposed to the risk of history, the contrasts of life, the fluctuation of contexts, the ambiguity of situations, the fickleness of hearts and feelings, incomprehension, derision, betrayal and denial. Persecution reveals men's hearts, it tests the missionary strength and verifies his love for Jesus. Nevertheless, it cannot stop the proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus exhorts his disciples not to fear men, their wickedness and their violence that can kill the body but not the soul,

freedom and love. He invites them to carry on the proclamation of the Word with frankness, loyalty, openly and without apprehensiveness.

He urges them to recognize him in all circumstances, places, times and conditions; not to be ashamed of him, of his word and teaching; not to fail in the testimony to be given to his mystery of salvation and his love. He will always support them, he will be with them and will reward them by recognizing them before his Father.

Pope Francis reminds us: "The disciple is called to conform his life to Christ, who was persecuted by men, knowing rejection, abandonment and death on the cross. The Christian mission in the name of tranquility does not exist! Difficulties and tribulations are a part of the evangelization work, and we are called to find in them the opportunity to verify the authenticity of our faith and our relationship with Jesus. We must consider these difficulties as the possibility to be even more missionaries and grow in the trust towards God, our Father, who does not abandon his children in the hour of the storm. In the difficulties of Christian witness in the world, we are never forgotten, but always assisted by the caring concern of the Father" (Angelus, 25 June 2017).

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help the Apostolic Movement to always live with renewed enthusiasm its mission of proclamation and remembrance of the Gospel which gives life, hope and salvation.

Father. Gesualdo De Luca

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

THE ANOINTING THAT MAKES THE UNION

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis on Pentecost Sunday (31.5.2020)

In his homily for Pentecost 2020, the Holy Father Francis offered a profound reflection on the relationship between diversity and unity in the Church.

Diversity belongs to the Church from her first origin. If we simply look at the historical reality of the apostolic college, we can easily see how it was made up of "simple people, used to living on the work of their own hands, like fishermen", but at the same time by those who, like Matthew, "had been an educated tax collector." In it, "there are different backgrounds and social contexts, Hebrew and Greek names, meek and other fiery characters and different visions and sensibilities" (Homily).

What holds all this diversity together? What makes it into a unique and united reality and what prevents it from turning into chaos and division? It is the gift of the Spirit, with which the apostles are "anointed" at Pentecost: "The union - the union of them different - comes with the anointing. At Pentecost the Apostles understand the unifying force of the Spirit. They see it with their own eyes when everyone, even speaking different languages, makes up one people: the people of God, shaped by the Spirit, who weaves unity with our diversities, who gives harmony because there is harmony in the Spirit. He is the harmony" (Homily).

Understanding the unity of the Church in a supernatural perspective, - that is, as the work of the Spirit - makes it possible not to fall into the temptations of uniformity and opposition. Meanwhile, unity is

not achieved by leveling and mortifying differences (character, origin, gifts, visions and sensitivity). For as Jesus, calling the apostles, did not pretend to standardize them, "making them into series models" (Homily), so unity in the Church will always require that the differences of the people that make her up, in the only truth of the faith, are respected. On the other hand, differences must always be contemplated and accepted in a supernatural perspective, without giving in to the temptation of a worldly gaze. In fact, the world, "sees us with right and left tendencies, with this and with that other ideology; the Spirit sees us of the Father and of Jesus. The world sees conservatives and progressives; the Spirit sees children of God" (Homily).

It is precisely the gift of the Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son, the one to enable us to such a sight, to remind us that we are all "children loved by God; all the same, in this, and all different" (Homily). It is an essential principle of our faith, which we can never forget or take for granted. Only by recognizing myself as a son loved by God, together with a multitude of other children, will I be able to look at others as brothers with whom to walk and not enemies against whom to fight.

Let us pray our Heavenly Mother, the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, to help us live in unity, welcoming and respecting us in our differences, as children loved by the Father, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

Father Davide Marino

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

BEFORE MY HEAVENLY FATHER
(XII Sunday T.O. Year A)

MY FRIENDS ARE ON THE WATCH FOR ANY MISSTEP OF MINE (Jer 20,10-13)

The prophet Jeremiah is the perfect image of Christ in the persecution because of his prophetic ministry. He feels daily the weight of his mission and often wishes he could retire, return to the simple life of one time. But the Lord has put the word in his heart as a fire that must explode. It cannot be restrained. Not only the enemies, but also the friends are waiting for his fall, that is that he gets tired and is abandoned. Till the last instant of his life even Jesus was tempted so that he fell, retreated and descended from the cross. But the Holy Spirit's strength has nailed him to the will of his Father. The nails are the figure that bind his body to the cross. Spiritual nails, Holy Spirit nails, bind his soul and his will to the will of God without any possibility of being separated. This is the great miracle of the Holy Spirit's strength that acts in Christ and in the prophets of the living God.

THE GIFT IS NOT LIKE
THE TRANSGRESSION (Rm 5: 12-15)

The obedience of Christ the Lord produces a fruit so rich of truth, light, holiness and righteousness, able to wash all the sin of the world. That of Jesus is an obedience that produces a grace without any limit. There is no sin that cannot be washed in it. There is no heart that cannot be sanctified. The sin of the origins is contracted by birth and by generation. Then personal sin, that is done by will, comes. In the grace one does not enter by generation according to the flesh, but by the reception of Christ and the Spirit. Christ is preached, we be-

lieve in his Word, we are reborn by water and by the Holy Spirit, become new creatures and enter into the fullness of the gift of Jesus Christ. The grace of Christ is drawn in Christ, it is lived in Christ and it is fruitful in Christ. It is given for Christ's obedience to those who believe in Christ, but it is lived all in Christ, in the service of Christ for the salvation of humanity.

EVERYONE WHO ACKNOWLEDGES
ME BEFORE OTHERS (Mt 10: 26-33)

Today, Christ Jesus tells every man that wants to be a disciple, what the conditions for entering into the eternal kingdom of his Father are. One becomes a disciple, accepting to engage for all the days of life to confess before every man that Jesus is his God, his one and only God and that his Word, his Gospel, is his one and only Law. He will have to make this profession of faith with works and words, with every man, even in the courts, or before a death sentence. We know that Jesus is very faithful to this covenant. He will never fail it. It is now up to the Christian to be faithful. The covenant will not change eternally. It cannot be changed unilaterally either. Since Jesus will never modify it, the decision is up to man: observing it to enter the eternal kingdom of God, not observing it and ending up into the other kingdom: that of Satan in hell. God's mercy is Christ Jesus and this covenant is the work of his great and infinite charity and love. He gives us the Father, our one and only eternal good, if we confess him in front of men.

by the theologian,
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