

## CAMEROON: Visit of the Apostolic Movement to the Douala central prison

"I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25.36). Being moved by this word of the Gospel, members of the Douala Apostolic Movement (Cameroon) organized a visit to the central prison of New Bell.

Led by Fr Gustave Mohomye, around 50 members were already registered with the competent authorities for the visit set for March 22, 2020. Adherents from Yaoundé and Ngaoundéré, as well as from Douala were also expected to be present. However, urgent provisions against the Coronavirus pandemic intervened on March 20 and so access to all public facilities was prevented.

Despite this, the adherents remained united and confident. We have collected gifts for prisoners, such as clothing, shoes, soap, detergents, rice, pasta, oil, salt, sugar and drinking water, in short basic necessities.

Finally, with the easing of protective measures that occurred in May, the prison regent set the date of 11 July for our visit. However, in compliance with the anti-pandemic rules that remained in force, the number of participants was reduced to fifteen, almost all students of the Saint Jérôme Catholic University, who study religious sciences living the charisma of the Apos-

tolic Movement, that of reminding God's word to the world.

It all started at 3 pm, with the welcome by the representative of the Catholic prison community, Mr. Paul Ngamo, who expressed his joy and gratitude for not having forgotten them despite the pandemic. He stressed that we have not tried and sentenced prisoners, often summarily labeled by society as thieves, rapists, robbers and thugs. It is true that these realities exist, he added, but it is also true that works of mercy are for all without distinction. And in addition there are also many victims of injustice or people who have been waiting for four or even eight years without their files going through the court. How can the accused defend himself if he is not summoned to be heard?

Subsequently, Mr. Ngamo hoped that these gestures of generosity in their regard could be spread and invited us to return shortly to share the Eucharist together with the prisoners.

The vice-regent in charge of the reception also came to greet and thank us for the gifts, considering that - he said - they were already without food and many inmates were without clothes.

A contribution was also offered to the prison's Caritas, intended to help pay bail bonds for the release of two prisoners and to support the purchase of medicines.

The visit ended with the recitation of a Rosary mystery.

A forthcoming activity of the Apostolic Movement will concern the manufacture of 200 masks, the distribution of soap and the installation of sanitizing dispensers in some small neighborhoods and villages.

**Father Gustave Mohomye**



### The quelled storm

**The** Gospel passage proclaimed this Sunday proposes the episode of the quelled storm. After having asked the disciples to get on the boat and precede him on the other side, where pagans live, Jesus dismisses the crowd and goes alone up the mountain, to pray. The boat is tossed about by the waves due to a strong wind. Towards the end of the night, Jesus goes to them walking on the sea. The disciples are troubled, but he reassures them: "Courage, it's I, don't be afraid". Peter asks to join him on the water. Once he gets out of the boat he starts to fear and is about to sink. He cries out for help and the Lord reaching his hand out, saves him.

All three synoptic gospels report this event; each inserting specific details. Matthew, for example, describes the Peter episode. However, in the narration of each, editorial traces are captured in which thematic echoes from the Old Testament resonate, such as the walking of God on the water and his self-presentation ("I am").

The nodal point of the passage seems to be the divine epiphany in which Jesus reveals himself by doing what God does (he walks on the sea and saves those who are in danger) and adopting his own way of speaking about himself ("I am").

Everything starts from the invitation to the disciples to enter the boat and go to the other side of the lake of Tiberias, the land of pagans. Rereading it in a symbolic key, the boat recalls the community of the faithful and in it every ecclesial reality, which has the mission, conferred on it by the Lord, to go to the pa-

gans, those who are considered sinners and far from salvation, to announce the good news of the Kingdom. The crossing is long and tiring; the boat is shaken by the waves stirred by contrary wind. On the hostile sea of history we advance amid the waves, exposed to the assaults of evil.

The crossing to the other side of the lake also symbolizes the difficult ferry trip to which Christian communities were called towards the end of the first century, driven by the Lord to leave the closed world of formal observance of the Law to reach a new way of understanding religiosity, animated by the commandment of love and, above all, open to each man. They had to ferry the boat from the presumption of belonging to the chosen people, of being the privileged, the only pure ones and holders of the true faith, to the awareness that in Christ all peoples are called to unite to walk in communion.

We too are in a difficult but necessary journey towards a new time and a renewed way of being Church. There may be times when we feel attacked by stormy winds that stir the waters. Precisely in those circumstances we are called, like Peter, to renew faith in the presence of the Lord, remaining faithful in charity, just as outlined by Paul: charity is patient, it is benign; it is not envious, does not boast, does not swell, does not disrespect, does not seek its interest, does not get angry, does not take into account the evil received and does not enjoy injustice, but it is pleased with the truth. It covers everything, believes everything, hopes everything and endures everything.

**Father Michele Fontana**

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## THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS

### Reflections starting from the catechetical cycle of H.H. Francis on prayer / 4 (27 May 2020)

God's plan for humanity is always good, yet in everyday life we also experience evil.

Reading the first pages of the Bible, we immediately notice the sin of Adam and Eve. They doubt God, they think that God is envious, that he does not want their happiness (Gen 3,17). They decide to rebel, they want to become like God and the opposite happens, they realize they are naked. Evil pays with evil, let's not forget it.

Evil becomes even stronger with the second human generation, let us think of Cain and Abel (Gen 4,1-16). Cain becomes envious of his brother, sees him as a rival and cannot dominate evil; he has the worm of envy inside and he carries out the murder, the first manifestation of the origin of many wars in the world. Even in the lineage of Cain, we read the lament of Lamech (Gen 4:23, 24), who becomes judge of himself and takes revenge, and so the evil is already rampant through the world, up to the flood and the tower of Babel. There is a need for a new beginning, whose fulfillment will be in Jesus Christ.

Yet in the Bible there is another story: Abel offers God a sacrifice, pleasing to him; Adam and Eve have a third child, Set, from whom Enoch, that means the mortal, descends. He walks with God and is raptured to Heaven (Gen 5: 22-24). Thanks to the just Noah, God does not cancel humanity (Gen 6,7-8). Thanks to the presence of these righteous men, who invoke the Lord with righteousness and bear the fruits of their faithfulness in history, it is immediately clear that prayer is

the refuge of man before evil and even himself.

Prayer turns the righteous away from ambitions and passions. Sincere prayer transforms our heart of stone into a heart of flesh (Ez 36,26). It takes a lot of humility and docility. Whoever prays in the state of justice, can make himself a true servant of God, working in silence, without loving success and also teaching how to pray.

It is necessary to teach children how to pray in particular. Today, they often no longer know how to make the sign of the cross, which is the first fundamental prayer. In this regard, the Pope recalls the episode of an atheist man, who saw his grandmother praying as a child; and in a difficult moment the memory of his grandmother was the unbroken bond that pushed him to start praying too, and for that prayer he met the Lord. Let us parents, educators and we pastors always ask ourselves if the little ones see in us an attractive, simple and authentic example and teaching of prayer: they too can recognize that bond with the Lord to be followed immediately, or at least to be found in a day in their life: that bond of prayer and listening, in which their life will find its fullest truth.

We have the sublime example in the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, who prayed together with the apostles, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit. May the prayer be a gift, strength, gentleness, sweetness and courage for all of us.

**Father Nicola Coppoletta**

The  
Lord's Day  
ROMAN RITE

O YOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHY DID YOU DOUBT?  
(XIX Sunday O.T. Year A)

A LIGHT SILENT SOUND  
(1Kings 19,9a.11-13a.)

Elijah is a strong, resolute prophet, always defending the purity of faith in the God of Israel, the only living and true God. The Spirit leads him to Mount Oreb. Here the Almighty God, who spoke with Moses from lightning and thunder, is not manifested as a stormy wind, or as an earthquake or as a fire, but in the whisper of a light breeze. The Lord begins to prepare his people. Tomorrow will have to talk to it from the humility of the flesh and from a Pierced one on the wood of a cross. Only the Lord can in his wisdom think of speaking to his people through a Crucifix, or better yet through his Only Son and moreover Crucified by his own people. Whoever lets himself be spoken by Him comes into the truth of his life and is saved. But whoever rejects him or does not let himself be spoken by him, he has no hope of salvation. He will speak well of God to men for their redemption, only whoever knows how to hear the Crucifix.

FOR THE SAKE OF MY BROTHERS  
(Rm 9: 1-5)

If Jesus saved Paul, he can save all his people. If Jesus became cursed with men to redeem man, Paul also wants to be separated from Christ for the conversion of his people. For this cause he is ready to give his life, to let himself be "departed" from Christ. This same love should animate every disciple of Jesus and each of his missionaries. Before the world's salvation everyone should show the same love. Now we know why Paul strives and struggles and why he has in his heart the desire to consume all

of himself, being spent more and more for the redemption of hearts. He gave life to Christ. Let Christ do whatever he wants, provided that it is always and only a price to redeem some soul and offer it to God. When we speak from the depths of love and offer life to Christ, no conditions are placed to the Lord. Life is given and that is enough.

TRULY, YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD  
(Mt 14: 22-33)

Without Jesus on the boat of the Church, this remains immersed in the waters of the world. She will never reach the shores of Paradise or those of the truth of Christ the Lord. Jesus is the heart, soul, mind, thought, truth, light, holiness of the Church and her life. With faith in the Word of Jesus you can walk on the waters, provided you believe from start to finish. Today, this is the danger that risks of seriously damaging the Church. Many of her children have lost faith in Christ and are drowning in the waters of the world. If one asks for help, Jesus saves and it is then that one might make a solemn profession of faith in his truth. If he does not ask for help, because he no longer believes in Him, he is sinking into the sea of the world and swallowed up by it. We know that today Jesus is no longer believed in his truth and has been downgraded to a man like the many men that have followed in history. The situation is seriously grave: we sink, because we lack real faith. Being without Christ, we cannot either reach him or take him with us on our boat.

*by the theologian,*  
**Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno**