**FRAGMENTS OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY**

**(How to be good disciples of Jesus today)**

***Catanzaro 26 November 2018***

**UNITED TO JESUS**

**Earth, fire, air and water. Tree, iron, lungs and fish. The tree grows and produces if it remains in the earth. The iron can be worked if it remains incandescent. The lung breathes if it is gets ever new fresh air.**

**The fish live until they are immersed in water. Without land the tree dries. Without fire the iron cannot be moulded. Without air the lungs do not breathe. Without water fish do not exist. Union is life.**

**Christ is the earth and the tree is the Christian. Christ is the fire and the iron is the Christian. Christ is the air and the lung is the Christian. Christ is water and the Christian is the great humpback whale that must always dwell in it.**

**Union is life, truth, nature and substance. Without union there is no life, truth, nature and substance. The being itself does not exist. There is no existence without air. Without land there is no existence. Without water there is no existence.**

**But even without fire there is no existence. Iron cannot be transformed, shaped and changed. Union makes an existence grow and gives fullness of truth to its being and to its life.**

**Without Christ never might exist the true Christian. Never might the true man exist. After sin man is no longer the man made by God, his Creator and Lord. From a free person he is now a slave person and a prisoner.**

**Only in Christ, with Christ and through Christ does man return to be true man, rather in him, with him and through him, he receives an even more beautiful and wonderful truth than the one he received at the origin of his creation.**

**If we break the union with Christ, if we detach ourselves from Him, if we separate ourselves from Him and if man does not build himself with Him, man remains in his slavery, imprisonment, that is his non-true humanity. He lacks the truth.**

**Through a miracle, a tree could live outside the earth. Through a miracle, no man can return to his original truth if he does not enter into Christ and does not draw grace, truth, light, life and salvation from him.**

**Christ Jesus is more necessary for a man than the heart, more than the feet, more than the hands, more than the veins, more than the head, more than the spirit and more than the soul. Christ is life, truth, grace and the true health of man.**

**As long as the Christian thinks, believes, will be convinced that Christ is not needed to man to be a man, he attests to the world that he is not a real man either. Since he thinks falsely, he testifies he is not in the truth.**

**The Christian who lives in Christ is governed by the thought of Christ. The Christian who lives in the world is governed by the thought of the world. Being the thoughts of the Christian thoughts of the world, he is without Christ.**

**PARTICULAR CHARISMAS**

**As each particular gift or charisma is bestowed by the Holy Spirit, it always remains under the government of the Holy Spirit. He alone knows when it is needed, when it is not needed, when it is useful and when it is useless.**

**Furthermore, the charisma is needed so that the whole Word is lived according to the truth that is in the Word. The Holy Spirit sometimes uses a gift and sometimes others. He alone knows the hearts and only He knows what is necessary for them.**

**Instead, one thing that might never be missing to the Word is life according to the Word and are the fruits of the Word: knowing how to forgive, being merciful, just, practicing justice and always walking in the Law of the Lord.**

**These and other fruits must always be produced by the disciple of Jesus. It is through the fruits that he manifests his truth as a disciple of Jesus. Without fruits, one is either a dry or a wild tree, untouched by divine grace.**

**One can also be devoid of particular gifts or charismas - I speak absurdly: the Holy Spirit always gives them - but never must he fail to produce the fruits of his faith, his hope and his charity.**

**The fruits of obedience to the Word of Jesus are the sign that our faith is alive, our charity active and our hope strong. The fruits are what give value to our witness and to our preaching.**

**Whoever says the Gospel, who announces the Word, without the fruits of the Gospel and without the works of the Word, is a vain preacher, an empty missionary. True faith in Christ might never be born for him. His faith is vain.**

**SUFFERING OF SIN OF SUFFERING OF GRACE**

**First of all it is necessary to make a distinction: there is suffering which is the fruit of our vices, of sin, of the transgression of the commandments and of the law of our God. This suffering does not come from God.**

**It is a suffering that man gives to himself. In Holy Scripture this suffering has a name: curse. It is a suffering that deprives man of all life. The curse in time becomes an eternal curse.**

**Vices today are a real mine of suffering. It suffices to think of the physical and spiritual, moral, family and social suffering produced by drugs, alcohol, smoke, and food taken in a disorderly fashion.**

**Think of all the suffering caused by the diseases of sexuality lived outside the holy law of the Lord. Every capital vice, every transgressed commandment produces its sea of ​​suffering and pain.**

**Every illness generated by vices produces even an economic suffering. A family, a country, a region and a nation are bled dry by the vices of their children. This suffering must be eliminated. How is it eliminated?**

**Converting us to obedience to the Commandments, to virtues and to a life lived far away from everything that damages our body, our soul and our spirit. Sin generates endless deaths.**

**Then there is the suffering that is the fruit of obedience to the Lord, of the practice of virtues, of listening to the Commandments and of life completely woven of fidelity to the voice of our God. This suffering is holy.**

**This suffering, offered to the Lord, elevates our soul in an ever greater holiness, but also becomes an instrument for the conversion of many souls. Suffering sanctifies the just and converts sinners.**

**The Christian must know only holy suffering. He must live it sustained by the grace of the Lord, he must offer it to God. When can he offer it to God? When he lives it in the holiness of the heart and thoughts.**

**The suffering of the just is proof of the truth of his faith, of his hope and of his charity. It is a proof of his true friendship with his Lord. It is the conformation to Christ, the suffering person for our love.**

**Jesus is the suffering Servant of the Lord. Due to his suffering, the fruit of his love, our sin has been expiated, our punishment cancelled. Now our suffering is lacking to the body of Christ. It must be added.**

**To Saint Paul who asked to be freed from an unspeakable suffering the Lord answered: "Paul, my grace is enough for you". That is how Paul concludes: "When I am weak, then I am strong". I can do everything with grace.**

**Here is the real truth that must be put in the heart: The just can do everything with the grace of God. Grace is drawn in prayer and in the sacraments. In grace we are strengthened with good works, especially with almsgiving and mercy.**

**We must increasingly grow in grace. The more we grow in grace, the more we grow in holiness, the more we become righteous and the more our sufferings redeem the world and sanctify us. However much suffering is wasted.**

**Why do we waste much suffering? Because it is not lived in fullness of grace. It is lived in a sea of ​​venial sins that lead us to rebel and also to say foolish, very insipid words and very vain words.**

**THE RIGHT VISION OF THE CROSS**

**Saint Paul: In fact, since in the wise plan of God, the world, with all its wisdom, did not know God, it pleased God to save believers with the foolishness of preaching. While the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, instead we proclaim Christ crucified:**

**scandal for the Jews and foolishness for the pagans; but for those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and wisdom of God. In fact what is foolishness of God is wiser than men, and what is God's weakness is stronger than men (1 Cor 1, 21-25).**

**The Letter to the Hebrews: Therefore we too, surrounded by this multitude of witnesses, having laid down all that is heavy and the sin that besieges us, we run with perseverance in the race that lies before us, keeping our gaze fixed on Jesus, the one who gives rise to faith and brings it to completion.**

**Faced with the joy that was placed before him, he underwent the cross, despising disgrace and sits at the right hand of the throne of God. Think carefully about him who has endured such great hostility from sinners against himself, so that you do not get tired losing heart.**

**You have not yet resisted to the point of blood in the fight against sin and have already forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as to children: *My son, do not despise the correction of the Lord and do not lose heart when you are taken up by him; because the Lord corrects the one whom he loves and beats anyone whom he recognizes as a son.***

**It is because of your correction that you suffer! God treats you like children; and what is the child who is not corrected by the father? Instead if you do not undergo correction, while everyone has had his part, you are illegitimate and not children!**

**Moreover we have had our earthly fathers as educators and we have respected them; will we not therefore submit much more to the heavenly Father, to have life? In fact, these corrected us for a few days, as it seemed to them; instead God does it for our good, in order to make us sharers in his holiness.**

**Of course, at the moment, every correction does not seem to be a cause of joy, but of sadness; however, afterwards, it brings a fruit of peace and justice to those who have been trained through it. Therefore, reassure your inert hands and feeble knees and walk straight with your feet, so that the limping foot does not have to cripple, but rather to heal (Heb 12,1-13).**

**St. Peter: Servants, be submissive with profound respect to your masters, not only to those good and mild ones, but also to those overbearing. This is grace: enduring afflictions, suffering unjustly because of the knowledge of God; in fact, what glory would it be able to bear to be struck when one is guilty? But if, by doing good, you will bear the suffering with patience, this will be pleasing before God.**

**In fact, you have been called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you may follow in his footsteps: he *did not commit* sin and *no deception was found on his mouth*; insulted, he did not respond with insults, abused, did not threaten revenge, but relied on the one who judges with justice.**

***He carried our sins* in his body on the wood of the cross, so that, living no longer for sin, we lived for justice; *from his wounds you have been healed*. You were *wandering like sh*eep, but now you have been led back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls (1Pt 2,18-25).**

**What is the right view of the cross? The cross must always be seen through the eyes of Christ Jesus and lived from his heart. Christ's eyes see it as a test of fidelity. How much is one capable of loving our Father?**

**Abraham loved God with perfect obedience to the Lord who asked him for the sacrifice of his son. Even the virgin Mary loved with perfect obedience to the Lord who asked her for the holocaust of her Son on Golgotha.**

**Jesus loved his Father by making himself obedient for his love until he died on a cross. Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of the Father, his Eternal Son. He, God, did not hesitate to submit to the cross for obedience to the Father.**

**How do you look at the cross according to truth? Seeing our life as a holy gift to offer to the Lord. We offer him a body of flesh, He, for our offer, tomorrow will give us an immortal body of light.**

**HOW TO LIVE LITURGICAL TIMES**

**Every liturgical time is marked by a particular Word of the Lord, drawn from the Law, from the Prophets, from the Psalms, from the Letters of the Apostles, from the Acts of the Apostles, from the Apocalypse of Saint John and from the Gospel.**

**Every day is marked by a particular Word of the Lord. it is enough to live the Word that the Lord makes resound to us today, in his Liturgy, to give truth to every moment of our life. The Word is everything.**

**But until there will be detachment, separation between the Word that the Lord offers us and our life no liturgical time will be lived according to truth. How we realize that liturgical time has been lived badly, very badly.**

**Our non-growth in the knowledge of the Word, in our obedience to the Word that is very scarce, from our non maturing in holiness. In fact, not only do we not progress, we often retreat.**

**Many start well. Then they end badly. They begin with faith, they end up in non faith. They start with charity and virtues, they are collapse in vices. This is the sign that the liturgical times are lived badly, very badly.**

**Another truth: If today, on this day, I live outside the Word I listen to, it will be difficult for me to be able to live tomorrow in the Word that I will listen to. I am missing the Word of today. Today's Word is life for the Word of tomorrow.**

**Every day must be brought into the Word of the day. Every day is a particular gift of Word. Every day must be sanctified with the Word of the day. One must always go with the sanctified day to the day that must be sanctified.**

**If today is not sanctified by the Word of today, tomorrow will come, but it lacks the sanctification of today. It becomes very difficult being able to sanctify it. This truth must be welcomed, kept in the heart and made our life.**

**Today, much responsibility in this falls on those who announce the Word. It is often badly announced. Speeches are often made about the Word, but the word is not announced, it is not made to be understood. It remains only Word!**

**The Word of God must receive an ever new life from the heart of whoever is ministers of it, to administer and serve it to the faithful according to the riches of truth, in fullness of grace and of the Holy Spirit. Life is from the Word.**

**MORE ON SPECIAL CHARISMAS**

**In his infinite, divine, eternal wisdom and intelligence the Lord chooses the ways through which a person must reach Paradise. In faith everyone welcomes his way. In grace he travels through it.**

**Our vocation is from the heart of the Father from eternity. Even the ways are from eternity by his wisdom and intelligence. When we choose other paths and other ways, it is then that we go out of obedience to the Lord.**

**Why do we choose other ways? Because in our pride we think that by following them, we give our person more lustre and more visibility. But the paths are not travelled for our lustre, but for the salvation of the world.**

**CALLED TO BE FAITHFUL SERVANTS**

**What is God's faithfulness? It is eternal obedience to his Word. Paradise is the fruit of God's fidelity to his Word. But even hell is the fruit of the Lord's faithfulness to his Word. For fidelity, he gives the former and the latter.**

**What is man's fidelity? It is the perennial obedience to the word that came out of his mouth. Every sacrament is celebrated on a word given by God to man and from man given to God. The word given to God obliges.**

**God obliges himself to the Word, he gives his grace without ever failing in it. Man too must commit himself to the grace received without ever failing in it. Instead today we fail with great ease.**

**The man finds a thousand pretexts, a thousand motivations, he invents what is inventable to be considered free from all allegiance to the given word. He does not know that the moment obliges for eternity. It does not oblige only for that historical moment.**

**Posthumous motivations make us unfaithful. They make us people who are not true. If the word given to God yesterday after a few days is no longer valid, will the word that today I give to God be considered valid tomorrow?**

**SHORT FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**The union with Jesus is not artificial in the Christian, it is of nature received in the sacrament that is celebrated. Baptism makes us one body with Christ. We have the same union with him of each member with his own body. It also makes us partakers of divine nature. We have a very special union with Jesus. This is true of every other sacrament.**

**If this union breaks down, if we are separated from Christ, we fall into death, in the same way as an organ that is separated from its body. Soon after, there is no more life in it. This truth obliges every disciple of Jesus to grow in union, strengthen it, make it stable and lasting, so that he can never be separated.**

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***As long as the Christian thinks, will think, will be convinced that Christ does not serve man to be a man, he attests to the world that he is not a real man either. Since he thinks falsely, he testifies that he is not in the truth. The Christian who lives in Christ is governed by the thought of Christ. The Christian who lives in the world is governed by the thought of the world. Being the thoughts of the Christian thoughts of the world, he is without Christ.***

**No one today believes in this union of grace, which is the true creation of a new nature. We are created as new creatures, but we are created to live in Christ, with Christ and for Christ. If we separate ourselves from Christ, if we are no longer in Christ, neither can we be with him and for him. Everything happens if we are in him and if we remain in him.**

**Mother of God, Mother of the Redemption, Mother of the Incarnate Word, ensure that every disciple of Jesus understands the new creation made in him by the celebrated sacraments and never separates from the supernatural source of his new life. Angels and Saints, obtain for us a strong and vigorous faith, capable of overcoming every temptation that wants to separate us from Jesus.**