

Catanzaro - Towards the Synod: meeting of young people organized by the Apostolic Movement

On November 23, in the "St. Joseph" parish of Catanzaro, a meeting was held of the young people, coming from the different parishes of the city, organized by the Apostolic Movement and led by Fr. Alessandro Cariotti.

The parish priest, Fr. Salvino Cognetti, after having greeted the bishop, H.E. Mons. Vincenzo Bertolone, the priests and the many young people present, thanked the members of the Apostolic Movement, not only for the liveliness with which they plan and animate such meetings, but also and above all for the humble and effective service they perform in the various works of the parish.

Father Alessandro, projecting a series of slides, focused on three key words (believing - intellectual honesty - getting aware / being there), explaining how the act of "believing", before than a theological aspect, is a decisive characteristic of existential scope, of the human being.

Believing. It is what moves man, since the crucial choices are precisely determined by the trust placed in tools and people that help him to achieve happiness. The belief recalls, in turn, other aspects: the aim to be achieved, the hope of being able to obtain it, the far-sightedness to be able to identify it, the expectation to achieve it.

Intellectual honesty. It is not only the disposition to the goodness of reasoning on the real, but the coherence in maintaining the principles of our reasoning constant. We are honest when the act of believing leads not to

cancel the transcendent vision of life. In fact, the latter urges to look upwards, stimulating to recognize those truthful signals from which to deduce the presence of God in existence. If one is intellectually honest, the pursuit of good leads man, almost naturally, to attain the knowledge of God.

Getting aware / being there. We are engulfed by the "paranoia of the ego" that makes us be too focused on ourselves, making us indifferent and insensitive to others. Not "getting aware" is reflected, then, in every moment that we live: in human relationships, in the varied conditions of poverty, in the relationship with the suffering of the brothers, in the ability to see God in our lives, etc. Therefore, this lack of awareness deprives us of a positive surprise.

To the three points that marked the meeting, joyful moments of songs, readings and testimonies were interwoven.

In the end, Mons. Bertolone, after thanking Fr Alessandro for the clear and interesting insights, encouraged young people to put the principles they listened into their hearts. He also affirmed that the strength of Christian witness is that "necessary coherence" so that the world can believe in God the Father who is always with us and loves us. In fact, that is how the bishop continued, all that is faith believed, needs to be translated into attitudes of concrete life and actions of charity towards man.

Finally, after the blessing, the event ended with a collective photograph to which His Excellency wanted to take part. (Source: calabriaecclesia.org).

"I hope that all young people can put into the heart all the beautiful words spoken by our archbishop and by Father Alessandro, that have touched my heart and, I hope, also that of all the other boys; because life is marvellous, it is a gift from God and we must love each other and believe in Christ and in the stupendous works that He wants to realize in ourselves and in all of Creation"

Aurora Romeo

Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus, Christ, Son of God

Saint Mark, preparing to write his book, from the first words wants everyone to know what he will find in it. His volume is a good news. It is the Gospel of Jesus, a Historical person that lived in our land, Palestine. This Historical person is the Christ of God, the King of the eternal Kingdom, the Prophet and the Priest of the New Covenant, according to ancient prophecies. This Jesus, who is the Christ, is also the Son of God. But he is not a child of God like any other man. He of God is the Son by essence, by eternal generation, because He is Light from the light and in the light of the Father, life from life and in the life of the Father. He is not light by participation of creation, but by eternal generation. The true Son of God, the Only Word of the Father, the eternal Person becomes flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He, the true God, also becomes the true man.

How do you know the truth of a man and also of a God? Through his works. How did the pharaoh of Egypt recognize the ineptitude of his gods and the omnipotence of the God of Moses? Through the works done by him that are full government and immediate obedience of creation to his Creator and Lord. How might every man recognize the difference that exists between him and Lord Jesus, between his inefficient and ineffective gods and the God of Christ Jesus? Through the works he performed. From work to work Mark introduces us into the mystery of Lord Jesus. The last work of Christ is his death on the cross. Seeing him die like that, the centurion, the pagan, confes-

ses: "Truly this was the son of God". The trip was really fruitful.

Today, like yesterday, it is urgent to take every man and introduce him into the knowledge of Jesus, Christ, Son of God. In the beginning, the one who prepares the hearts to welcome the Messiah that is about to come is John the Baptist. How does John prepare the way for him? Making the difference between his mission and that of Jesus, but also between his person and that of the Messiah announced by him already present in the world. John is very great, the greatest among those born of women. But he is not God. He is just a man who is also in need of salvation and redemption. Jesus is God, Eternal, Immortal, Divine and Omnipotent. John baptizes with water for the conversion and the remission of sins. Instead, Jesus will baptize in the Holy Spirit. Distances are of eternal abyss both in the person and in the mission.

If the Christian wants to prepare the way for Christ the Lord, he is obliged to show the world the abyss that reigns between his works, the ones that he does in Christ by virtue of the Holy Spirit and those made by any other man. Between the God in whose name Christ is crucified and the God of Jesus in whose name He lets himself be crucified, the abyss is great. We are before two different Gods. The difference between the God of the executioner and the God of the martyr the difference is clear. Mother of God, ensure that every disciple of Jesus shows the difference between his God and the God of every other man.

Father Costantino Di Bruno

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"LET US RAISE OUR HEARTS"

Reflections starting from the General Audience of H.H. Francis (ROME, 08.11.2017)

The Holy Father Francis has announced that he will begin a new series of catechesis to "understand well the value and meaning of Holy Mass, to live ever more fully our relationship with God". He invites us to bring our gaze to the Eucharist, "the heart of the Church" which is "thanksgiving to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that involves us and transforms us in his communion of love". A well understood value by a group of Christians who, in 304, surprised in celebrating the Eucharist, said: "Without Sunday we cannot live", which it meant: if we cannot celebrate the Eucharist, we cannot live, our Christian life would die".

A great echo has caused a passage from this catechesis: "because at a certain point the priest who presides over the celebration says: "Let's raise our hearts?". He does not say: "Let us raise our mobile phones to take pictures!"». I want to briefly resume his question: "What does this mean? What does, Let us raise our hearts, mean?".

To understand this expression, let us look at Moses that raised the "staff", sign of divine omnipotence, to ask for the Lord's intervention. He believed in God's omnipotence and invoked it by raising his staff - hands are an instrument to raise the staff - as in dividing the Red Sea (cf. Ex 14), in the prayer to ask for Joshua's victory over Amalék (cf. Ex 17). There is a bond of communion of prayer: Moses prays having faith in the omnipotence of God in his hands and the Lord responds with his omnipotence by working prodigies. We find the same modality at the Cana wedding: Mary believes in the omnipotence of Jesus

and invokes it, Jesus performs the miracle. Without faith, the miracle is not accomplished. In fact, at the time of Isaiah the people lived in moral disaster; they had replaced faith and obedience to the word with worship; they thought they could be heard by the Lord only by raising their hands, but they did not get anything: "When you stretch out your hands, I turn my eyes away from you. Even if you multiplied the prayers, I would not listen: your hands are dripping blood" (Is 1,15-16). The same warning is given by Jeremiah: "Perhaps for you is a den of thieves this temple on which my name is invoked?" (Jer 7:11), and it is also taken up by Jesus (cf. Mt 21,13).

Therefore, one must "raise the heart" and not the hands to be pleasing to the Lord. The heart rises through conversion, because the Lord fills it with his word and his love. Similarly to what happens in the "Eucharistic bread" which is "raised" and presented at the moment of the offertory, so that the Lord "consecrates" it in the power of the Spirit transforming it into the Body of Christ, so it must take place in every Eucharistic celebration for every Christian: he must "raise his heart", offer it to the Lord, so that he may consecrate it, transform it into a new heart (cf. Ez 36,26), making it conform to the heart of Christ, in which there is the whole heart of the Father, that gives "full meaning to the life of each" and enables to be witnesses of his love in the world. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help us to "raise our hearts" to the Lord in a true and fruitful way.

Father Gesualdo De Luca

The Lord's Day
II Sunday of Advent
Year B

PROCLAIMING A BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE MADE LOW (Is 40.1-5.9-11)

The Lord comes and brings with him the salvation of his people. It is given, but it must also be accepted. To the Lord that comes you must prepare the way. The mountains are levelled and the removed earth is poured into the valleys. The road becomes flat. The Lord can easily follow it. On the spiritual side it is the same thing. In order for the Lord to be able to enter into the heart and fill it with all grace and light, it is urgent for it to level every mountain of transgression and disobedience to his covenant. Every idolatry and immorality must be eradicated. All vice of concupiscence and pride must be removed. In place of evil, the desire and the will to work only the good according to every commandment of the Law must be put. If the Lord comes and finds the heart either hard as a road or full of stones and little earth or there is a cultivation of thorns in it, every seed of truth, justice and sanctity will be suffocated. The work of man's conversion must correspond to the work of God.

THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A THIEF (2Pt 3,8-14)

The Christians of the first hour lived in expectation of the imminent coming of Christ Jesus on the clouds of heaven. Both Paul and Peter had to correct this faith. Jesus will come. It is a certain truth. But when will he come? Nobody knows about it. A thousand years with God are like a day and a day like a thousand years. However, there is a second truth. Even if the Lord does not come to create new heavens and a new earth, he will come, indeed he comes, for every single person at the moment of death. Time

ends, we enter eternity. Death comes to everyone like a thief, when no one is expecting it. Knowing this, the disciple of Jesus must always be prepared to go to meet him who comes for judgment. If He finds us asleep, in darkness, outside the Gospel, there will be no eternal life for us. He might not welcome us in his light because we are darkness. From the light one goes into the light, from darkness into darkness.

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD (Mk 1: 1-8)

John the Baptist prepares the way for the Lord by inviting to conversion for the forgiveness of sins. What is conversion according to his most perfect truth? We can say that conversion is a real move. A change of home, city, country, nation and kingdom. It is a passage that is abandonment. You leave the before and enter the after. One comes out of the house of the thoughts of man and enters that of the thoughts of God. The kingdom of Satan or evil is denied and one embraces that of the good whose Law is the eternal Word of the living God. This passage to be effective and to produce fruit must be without return. You abandon the before in a definitive way, you enter the after in a perennial, indeed eternal way. If from the after you go back to the before again, there is no real conversion. There is also no conversion if you live simultaneously in the before and after. The heart is one. Either it is entirely brought in after, or it all remains in the before. You cannot even get converted by fiction. Life with its works attests that we are in the realm of evil. The true conversion is of the whole man.

by the theologian,

Fratr Constantino Di Bruno