

NOTES / "LOVE IS NOT LOVE IF..."

[...] How many examples of true love are there in Scripture! It would be difficult to contemplate them one by one... Let us think of the love of the Virgin Mary. A provident, alert love, attentive to our difficulties, troubles and needs. A love that only a Mother like Her nourishes constantly towards us[...].

Love in Scripture is concrete and effective. "True love is concrete, it is in the works and it is a constant love. It is not just enthusiasm. Many times it is also a painful love: let us think of the love of Jesus carrying the cross" (Pope Francis, Homily May 7, 2015). Christian love is also unpredictable... in the depths of the heart perceives the inspirations that the Spirit arouses it and follows them with passion and tenacity. Let us think of Mother Theresa, a small pencil in the hands of God, called by God to remind the world of mercy and compassion for every man. The love of God knows how to precede the steps of man to direct them towards his most authentic good [...]

Love "believes" in what it does. Love knows fatigue, suffering and humiliations but also knows the reason why to bear them and go on: for you, Lord!

True love "communicates itself, does not remain isolated". "Love gives of itself and receives, it is made that communication that is between the Father and the Son, a communication that the Holy Spirit makes" (Pope Francis).

Both received and given love, renews you and makes you be different. However, not

all kinds of love are able to renew you from deep inside. There are passing, not sincere types of love, not rooted in the Word of God. They are types of love with personal taste and pleasure, according to the desires of those who only want to use them to satisfy themselves. On the other hand, there are other types of love that Scripture itself demands: that towards one's parents, especially in old age and in times of difficulty; the one between a man and a woman who give each other reciprocally in the journey of matrimony; the one between friends who really know how to be each the life, support and breath of the other. Sincere kinds of love, rooted in the Word of God.

True love is taught by the Lord. We wish we were all masters in what we do; even in love we wish we were the ones to have the last word. However, true love can only be taught by the One who made love his "project of life". The One who was able to give his life for us, showing us love in its most sublime form.

There is no true love without the Eucharist. It is nourishment, the motor of the soul that gives new strength and new eyes to look at the world in a different way. Sometimes we find right within us the resistances to love for lack of strength and will, due to our given and not reciprocated tired and disheartened love. The Eucharist reminds us of who we are: the gift of God for humanity.

Guarding... the heart, eyes and thoughts. We should learn to immediately recognize what is good for the heart from what instead saddens, discourages and removes it from God. We are the ones who must protect our hearts. The heart that constantly feeds on the Word of God and of the Eucharist is strengthened and refined in the search for the true and authentic good. You never lose in love. You only come out winning in loving as the One who has loved, loves and will always love the man made in the image and likeness of Love.

Father Salvatore Bilotta

I know who you are: the Holy One of God!

In the Holy Spirit the truth of God and of man is known. In Him it must always be said, uttered and announced. It is always the truth of salvation, redemption, reconciliation, peace, mercy, forgiveness and true justice in him. He alone knows the times and moments of the announcement and only He gives the modalities or historical forms through which the truth is to be given. Whoever is not in the Spirit knows nothing of the truth, because he does not know the truth of the heart to which it is to be offered. Without the Spirit, the truth that is said does not produce good, but evil. For the "truth" it is possible to kill a person, to create eternal enmities, to generate profound and indelible hate and also to turn people away from Christ and from God.

The impure spirit knows who Christ Jesus is: the Holy One of God! His Messiah. He knows and says it. But he is not moved by the Spirit of God. The truth that he says is not for the salvation of Christ, for his good and at the service of man's redemption. He speaks from the truth to ruin Jesus. He is cunning. He knows that the people await a king that holds the sword, creates the revolt against the enemies of Israel and frees the land of the fathers from every foreign interference. He uses the truth, but to put it at the service of falsehood. If the people had acclaimed him his Messiah, for Jesus the days would have been really counted. He would have been killed before he even started preaching the Gospel. The work of redemption

would have failed.

Our truth comes from the Holy Spirit when it is aimed at salvation, redemption, conversion and justification. This is why it must always be conjugated with great love, great mercy and compassion and great pity. Instead it comes from Satan when it is at the service of our interest and is used to achieve particular and personal goals or ends. Everyone must necessarily ask himself: "What is the goal I want to achieve? Is it the defence of my position or the salvation of a heart? Is it the affirmation of my personality or the good of the other?". If the end to be achieved is a thing, ours is always a diabolical truth. But if the end is the redemption of a heart, mercy and compassion according to modalities established by the Holy Spirit and not by us must be added to the truth.

That the truth uttered is diabolic is revealed by our obstinacy in the end to be pursued, the ruthless and cruel judgment on people, the will to be recognized only us paladins and defenders of justice, the desire to affirm our vision at any cost and the non renunciation even to our life to create peace. If we are at the service of the satanic truth, we cannot hope to work for the kingdom of God, but for its destruction and devastation. May the Virgin Mary, the humble and gentle woman, patient and merciful, help us so that we walk in the Holy Spirit, so that only He speaks and acts through us. Without him in us, we will always be at the service of the diabolical truth.

Father Costantino Di Bruno

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BRING THE SAME GAZE OF THE LORD TO THE SICK

Reflections starting from the Message of H.H. Francis for the 26th World Day of the Sick (11.2.2018)

In the message for the world day of the sick, the Holy Father wanted to call to our attention the suffering of Jesus Christ crucified and make us look at human suffering with different eyes and heart.

Illness and suffering are part of the human condition, since original sin and, although God permits its existence, he certainly does not rejoice for it. He showed this in an unsurpassable way with Jesus Christ: during his preaching, he dedicated a great part of his earthly ministry to healing the sick and comforting the afflicted, thus revealing the true compassionate face of the Christian God. And not only that. He himself took it upon himself, fully experiencing its essence, above all in his passion, on the cross and in his death on the cross to transform it into a redemptive act. The cross of Christ Jesus "does not represent a tragedy without hope, but the place where Jesus shows his glory" (From the message).

And truly, the sufferings and death of Christ were the ones that showed God's love for the suffering man. Through his paschal mystery Jesus has conquered salvation for all of humanity. "To the gift of Jesus corresponds the task of the Church, who knows that she must bring to the sick the same gaze full of tenderness and compassion of her Lord" (From the message).

Through a special sacrament, the Church continues Jesus' ministry of caring for the sick. Thus the liturgy of the Anointing of the sick continues faithfully the example of the Saviour. This sacrament is better understood in the context of the Church's attention to the sick.

Even the Virgin Mary is called to take care

of the life of the suffering man: "On the cross Jesus cares about the Church and of all humanity, and Mary is called to share this same concern. [...] She will be in particular the mother of the disciples of her Son and will take care of them and their journey. [...] The unspeakable pain of the cross pierces Mary's soul (cf. Lk 2:35), but does not paralyze her. On the contrary, as the Mother of the Lord a new path of donation begins for her" (From the message).

What happens on Calvary is a true epiphany of love that becomes a gift and offer of suffering for the life of all humanity; love of the M.H. Trinity that becomes a gift in the life of Christ Jesus to accomplish the redemption of all men, a love of participation and suffering lived and offered by Mary in the gift of herself and the life of her Son for the benefit of all humanity. She lives her divine motherhood not only by generating the Author of salvation for the benefit of all humanity, but also by accompanying him to Golgotha, with the gift of all her love, with the full participation of her being to the pain and suffering of the Son. Mary has also contributed to the price for the ransom of humanity, she participated living for the Son, listening and loving the Son, suffering and praying with him. With Mary the Christian must also enter into this dynamic of Redemption and before everything else "he must recognize Mary as his own mother. And in this recognition he is called to welcome her, to contemplate in her the model of discipleship and also the maternal vocation that Jesus has entrusted her" (From the message).

Father Antonio Iozzo

**The
Lord's Day**

**WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH US,
JESUS OF NAZARETH? (IV Sunday O.T. Year B)**

TO HIM YOU SHALL LISTEN (Dt 18: 15-20)
In the desert, the Lord promises Moses that he would have sent a prophet equal to him, through whom he would have addressed his people with a human voice. The prophet is obliged to always speak in the name of the Lord, saying only his Word. The people are obliged to listen to the prophet as the most pure voice of their God. If the prophet does not speak in the name of God, he is responsible for every word not of God uttered by him. If the people do not listen to the prophet, they too are accountable to God. What is the sign that the prophet is true and not false? The sign is given by his word that is fulfilled. Since the Word of Christ was fulfilled - He said that He would have resurrected on the third day and in truth He resurrected on the third day - He proved to be the true prophet. Every other Word of his will be fulfilled. Now it is the people the one responsible for non listening. It will have to give God account for its refusal. The prophet has testified that he is a true prophet. His Word is of God.

HOW HE MAY PLEASE THE LORD (1Cor 7,32-35)

Every man is made of one heart, one body and one soul. He can give himself entirely to one thing and one person. If he gives himself to wealth, he cannot give himself to God. If he gives himself to the world, he cannot give himself to the Gospel. If he consecrates himself to the kingdom for its diffusion in the world, he cannot consecrate himself to marriage. If he is devoted to evil, never might he be voted to the good. The heart is of the one to whom it was given. St. Paul reveals to man a simple, linear and free wisdom. Do you, man, want to devote yourself entirely to serve the kingdom? You cannot tie yourself to a

woman. If you tie yourself to a woman, you have to take care of how you can please her and the same is also true of the woman. Who wants to take care of how he can please the Lord, must give his heart only to the Lord. Marriage is a holy thing as a holy thing is service for the kingdom. It is not a holy thing to think that we can fully give our heart to one and the other.

HAVE YOU COME TO DESTROY US? (Mk 1: 21-28)

Satan knows who Jesus is: the Christ of God. He also knows that if Jesus were to fulfil his mission, that which the Father has entrusted to him, it would be the end for him and his kingdom. Before Jesus can destroy or ruin him, he thinks it well to ruin Jesus by revealing his identity. Jesus intervenes promptly. First he imposes him silence and then orders him to get out of the man he held in his possession. What Satan did with Christ, tempting and putting him in difficulty with the world, he also does it with every one of his disciples. He tempts him so that he desists from the mission. He gives him trouble with the world, so that the world uses him not in accordance with the mission received. Satan has only one purpose: being a Christian according to the world, never according to the heart of Christ and God, in the pure truth of the Holy Spirit. If Satan sees that the Christian is according to the world, it is enough for him to take care of his worldliness. If he is not according to the world, he attacks him with every temptation and creates all sorts of difficulty for him so that he abandons Christ and puts himself at the service of the sin of the world.

*by the theologian,
Frater Constantino Di Bruno*