

Notes / From I to us. Personal faith and community

If there is a characteristic that emerges when we stop to think critically about the society of our time, this is certainly individualism. However, it is not a simple "manufacturing defect" of this historical moment, but a real spiritual pathology, which prevents the person from realizing his own vocation as a creature in the image and likeness of God.

This "pathology" risks touching even our way of conceiving faith, making it false and ineffective in relation to our true spiritual good and our salvation. In an age in which one is accustomed to fruition and rapid consumption, even of contents and non-material goods, the danger is that of reducing our relationship with the Lord to a series of individual acts. Even participation in the Sacraments, catechesis or prayer meetings can degrade to the mere use of a service: I go to church, I take the "product" that is useful to me, I go back to my life without any relationship with others.

True faith opens the life of the individual I to the "us" of the community

In reality, true faith in Christ opens the life of the single, of the individual I, to the us of the community, integrates it into a reality greater than itself, which is the "place" in which the Lord manifests himself, makes himself present, and in which the communion of life

is realized which attests and makes the identity and style of the disciples of Christ attractive in the eyes of the world.

It is true that the Lord thinks, loves, calls and will one day judge each one personally. However, it must be understood, that this is a personal, not an individualistic relationship. In fact, the person is not only identity, individuality, but also relationship and need of the other. This is why Jesus gathers us in community, calling us to realize that communion of life and love, which He wants to be the hallmark of being his disciples.

The Christian community is a set of relationships among people who share the same life, in Christ

The - diocesan, parish, associative and presbyteral - community is not simply given by the converging of many individuals to a certain place (for example, the church), to do a certain thing (for example, Mass participation) and then return to dissolve again in their individuality at the end of this activity. Rather, the community is a set of relationships, that reality created by the Word and Sacraments, which make those who have encountered Christ, not disciples of a philosophical school, who can also share nothing beyond some concepts, but part one of the others, members of a single Body, brothers, far beyond and much more than the bonds of blood, in their Lord, called to share life. Then, in this perspective, the commitment to build up and serve the community and to grow in fraternal communion (also made of relationship, forgiveness, dialogue and confrontation, of seeking the other and of interest for his spiritual and material needs) becomes a fundamental criterion for verifying the truth of the personal faith and spiritual growth.

Father Davide Marino

He retired to a deserted place, and there he prayed

Every man can act from himself or from God. This rule also applies to Jesus who is a true Man, as well as the true God. He can also act from himself or from the Father, from his will and from his desires or thoughts. Simon and those who are with him want to act as the "Holy Spirit" to Christ Jesus. They desire that he devotes himself to the care of the sick, the suffering and every person injured in his body. But Jesus did not come to do these things. One always falls into temptation when either Satan, or us, or the world takes the place of the Holy Spirit. Jesus never changed "Holy Spirit". He always let himself be led by Him and never allowed others to take his place.

Why did Jesus always succeed to let himself be led by the Spirit of God and we instead replace him either with Satan or with ourselves or with the world? The answer comes from his behaviour in his relationship with the Father. Jesus is in the bosom of the Father, he is full of grace and truth, he himself is eternal light. But he is truth, light, eternal life and holiness that always receives from the Father. We can affirm that Jesus lives an eternal generation with the Father. Even in his human will He is perennially generated by the Father. His is an endless generation. Moment by moment. Day to day. Prayer for Jesus is the true generation of his heart from the heart of the Father, of his spirit from the Spirit of the Father, of his will from the Father's will, of his thoughts from the thought of the Father and of his desires from the Father's desire. In Jesus, prayer is the true generation. He withdraws into de-

serted places to be generated by God and in Him.

Since prayer for Him is true generation from God, when he comes out of prayer he is fully with the heart, the will, the mind, the desires and the thought of the Father. Never might he be from himself, from us, from the world and from Satan. Never might he let himself be generated by himself, by us, by the world and by Satan. Peter and the others can also manifest the wishes of the world or their thoughts. But Jesus is refractory to every generation that is not from the Father in the Holy Spirit. Being perennially generated by the Father, he immediately overcomes every temptation and puts himself at the service of his renewed generation. Today, the Father has generated him for an evangelizing mission and he sets out to go and preach elsewhere, into the villages and cities of Galilee.

Praying is the desire for true regeneration from God in thoughts, in the soul, in the spirit and in the body. If we do not live prayer as true regeneration, but as a mere question or request for some grace, we will be regenerated either by ourselves, or by the world, or by Satan or by the many concerns of the earth. The Christian that is generated by himself, by Satan and by the world, is sad. He is a Christian that might never build the kingdom of God, because his work is for its destruction. Mother of God, do not allow this happen. Help us so that today and always we are generated by God, in Christ Jesus, through his Holy Spirit.

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WHY GO TO MASS ON SUNDAYS?

Reflections starting from the General Audience of H.H. Francis (12.12.2017)

"Why go to Mass on Sundays?" With this question the Holy Father opens one of his Wednesday catecheses. In his reflection he brings to mind the foundations of the Christian faith on Sunday, the day of the Lord.

Sunday is the day when the Lord Jesus has risen and is manifested to the disciples. On Sunday he poured out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. It is from these two events that Sunday assumed central importance for Christians. In fact, since the origins of Christianity, Sunday is the day on which Christians gather to celebrate the Lord and nourish themselves of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist, heartening and reinvigorating their own forces to face life according to the Law of Lord. "For these reasons, Sunday is a holy day for us, sanctified by the Eucharistic celebration, the living presence of the Lord among us and for us. Therefore, it is the Mass that makes the Christian Sunday!».

Being a Christian does not mean following a fashion, or belonging to a social state, or maintaining a custom, or, still, having the documents in order to be able to take advantage of a "divine bargain" from which to receive what you need without any personal commitment. None of this. Being a Christian means being a "kinsman" of Christ, living in his own life, being part of his mystical body which is the Church. This specific identity implies an important consequence: everybody, in order to be able to live and continue to exist, needs to be nourished in all its components. If a part of the body does not receive its nourishment, there is decay and death for it. In the same way the mystical Body of Christ also needs to be

nourished in all its parts and its food is the Sunday Eucharist. It is Christ who nourishes us, his mystical Body, giving us himself as food to eat so that, by receiving his strength in this way, we can live by putting his Word into practice.

We hear more and more often say: "What need is there to participate in Sunday Mass? I do not hurt anyone, I try to live in peace and love others. I love the Lord, I always pray, I do not need to go to Mass". To correct these statements it is not enough to say that there is the Commandment to sanctify the feasts to be observed. Not participating in the Sunday Eucharist means not drawing the strength necessary to love and act according to the will of the Lord. The Holy Father urges to underline it: "How can we practice the Gospel without drawing the necessary energy to do it, one Sunday after another, at the inexhaustible source of the Eucharist? We do not go to Mass to give something to God, but to receive from Him what we really need".

It is a matter of a vital nourishment of which it is not possible to do without, on pain of losing hope, the ability to cope with worries, living in constant fear of tomorrow: "We Christians need to participate in Sunday Mass because only this way with the grace of Jesus, with his living presence in us and among us, we can put into practice his Commandment, and thus be his credible witnesses".

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, grant us a strong faith in Sunday Mass to be true witnesses of the Gospel of your Son Jesus.

Father Gregorio Nicola Corea

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**EVERYONE IS LOOKING FOR YOU
(V Sunday O.T. Year B)**

THEY COME TO AN END WITHOUT HOPE (Jb 7: 1-4.6-7)

Job is in great suffering. He lacks a truth in his heart. On the one hand he is closed in his perfect justice. He is devoid of the light that justice does not free either from sickness or from the great and unspeakable suffering. It does not even free from physical death. Justice has only one purpose: making ourselves acceptable to the Lord and preparing for us an eternal kingdom of heavenly glory and bliss. On the other hand, his friends are prisoners of an ancient thought about God. Those who do good are blessed. Those who do evil are cursed. If Job is cursed, his suffering reveals it, he is a wicked person. Job wished God attested him his justice. This would be enough for him. Instead, God is silent because it is not time to speak. With his silence God often reveals more than with his Word. He manifests the depths of the heart of man and his non-holy thoughts. The silence of God is the greatest proof of faith. Suffering is a true Word of God.

WOE TO ME IF I DO NOT PREACH THE GOSPEL! (1Cor 9,16-19.22-23)

Who has to break the silence of God in the history of humanity is the apostle of the Lord. He must be true divine Word before every man. Even today, God is silent, Christ is not speaking, the Holy Spirit lives a deafening silence, because he wants to reveal to every heart its great folly, but also wants to manifest the great responsibility of the Lord's Apostle when from the Word of God becomes the word of the world according to the world. God withdraws his prophet onto the mountain. For a moment he is silent and the people become idolatrous. The priest from the Word of God becomes the word of

the people and it is the great spiritual disaster. This is why St. Paul says: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!". Woe to me if I withdraw onto the mountain and leave the world abandoned to itself. In an instant it becomes a worshiper of idols. Did not the community of Corinth, which he had left for some time, become a worshiper of the idol of its vainglory?

LET US GO ON TO THE NEARBY VILLAGES (Mk 1: 29-39)

Jesus can devote himself to the treatment of sickness and suffering and leave the world in silence and in the privation of the voice of God or devote himself to let the Word of the Lord be listened by every heart. If he were to devote himself to the care of the body, the spirit of man would remain in great idolatry and He himself would be a lover of it. If instead he devotes himself to the Word, the heart of man is illuminated with truth and knows that all suffering can be lived because it is the condition of humanity to produce the redemption of its sins. The choice of Christ must be the choice of every apostle of Christ. If he devotes himself to the care of the bodies he might never devote himself to the care of the Word. If he wants to devote himself to the care of the Word, he cannot devote himself to the care of the bodies. He must let others take care of the bodies. He must commit all his spiritual and physical energies to take care of the Word so that it can reach intact and pure every heart and every mind. His silence generates idolatry. If today Christians are turning into idolaters, this is due to the silence of the Word.

*by the theologian,
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