

# SPIRITUAL NOTES

## Brothers are not chosen.

### Community and communion

I remember that, at the time of the seminar, one of my formators used to remind us: "Friends are chosen, brothers are not".

It must be admitted, it is a simple phrase, apparently obvious, but expressive of a great truth, for those who are called by the Lord to form the community of his disciples. In fact, it tells me that it is not I the one who chooses the people with whom to form my community. As we come into the world from people and among people we cannot predetermine, so we all come to find ourselves in a community, together with people we cannot "calculate" and that it is the Lord the one, for reasons that belong to the inscrutable wisdom of his love, to place next to us.

Being a community is accepting a mystery that is beyond us and which we cannot dominate. When we do not accept this mystery, when we lack this sense of faith, everything falls into the worst aspects of the human being. Trouble begins there. Divisions, factions and "parties" are created. Each chooses the one closest to him or those who follow him. In this way, he and the community become infinitely poorer,

because that wealth which the difference of each one brings to all others becomes a pretext for division and conflict. On the other hand, when dialogue, mutual availability to listen, to respect and to fraternal love are maintained, differences become treasures.

This costs effort, it's true. Dialogue and collaboration sometimes also pass through misunderstanding, conflict, confrontation and divergence; but if we keep the relationship alive (with the Lord and among us), frictions also become the means by which grace refines us, tempers us and completes us. The excessive prudence of one is thus dissolved into a greater freedom and openness to the good and the excessive audacity of another into greater prudence and foresight. The excessive firmness of one is moderated and made an instrument of life by the sweetness of another, while those who are more fearful and insecure can receive strength and courage from their brother. However, this can happen if we remain together, if we do not elude the luminous cross of comparison, remaining willing to let ourselves be constantly "worked" in the truth - which comes to us also through others - from the invisible and industrious hands of the Spirit.

Therefore, let us never create factions, let us not choose our brothers. Rather, let us welcome all those we have - especially those most different than us - as a great and generous gift that the Lord has wished to make to our incompleteness.

**Father Davide Marino**



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## If your hand causes you to scandal

Today, scandals are for men like water for fish. We are all immersed in every scandal of thought and deed, words and omissions, irresponsibility and foolishness. Everything that man says or does in a public way contrary to the will of his Lord is a scandal. Everything contrary to the will of Jesus, according to the truth that the Holy Spirit has placed in every Word of the Gospel is scandal for Christians. Nowadays, scandals are all being clothed in diabolical and satanic wisdom. Evil is being made to pass as a right, falsehood as most pure truth, injustices as acts of charity, perverse doctrines as the Gospel of God and immorality as an innocent fruit of nature. As the tree produces its fruit, so the body produces its immorality. If it is a fact of nature, it is a good thing and cannot be forbidden, on the contrary it must be declared a praiseworthy thing, indeed something admirable of being proclaimed human right. Whoever were to think the opposite is a homophobe, that is, an enemy of truth, of right, of justice and of love.

That scandals abound and will abound is a fact. Jesus says so. Scandals have always been and will always be. We know that for the operators of scandals the kingdom of heaven will be closed for eternity. For them there is the lake of fire and sulphur. Thus the Apocalypse of St. John the Apostle attests. However, Jesus teaches his disciples a truth that must always govern their lives. It is up to each of his disciples to guard against being conquered in mind, heart, will, body, desires and feelings of the scandals that are in the world. What is the way

indicated by Him so that we can save ourselves from the scandals of the world? The custody of the senses and the members of our body. It is necessary that our body, in all its parts, wants to safeguard itself from being conquered by scandals. This is why it is impossible to see everything, to listen to everything, to enjoy everything and to touch everything. It cannot even go everywhere. In certain environments sin is inevitable, because it is known that only sin reigns in them.

Today, to the gravity and universality of the scandals we add another element that makes sure that no scandal is avoided by us. The Christian has lost the very notion of the truth of Christ and the will of God. He lacks the light that enables him to either make a discernment or a separation. Who is acquainted with and identifies the truth of Christ Jesus, knows that the opposite or what is opposed to it is falsehood. Who does not possess this principle of sound discernment, might never know what is true and what is false, what is sin and what instead is obedience and virtue. But even if he knew the truth of Christ, there is a falsehood that makes everything useless and vain. All will eventually be welcomed into the kingdom of God. Good and evil will eventually turn into eternal light. What use is it to make the difference today, if there will be no difference tomorrow? Mother of God, free the disciples of Jesus from this falsehood that makes everything false and useless.

**Father Costantino Di Bruno**

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# THE FAMILY: "BEACON" OF DIVINE LOVE

Reflections starting from the Speech of H.H. Francis  
on the occasion of the World Meeting with Families (25.08.2018)

In front of the many families gathered from all over the world in "Croke Park Stadium" in Dublin, the Holy Father wanted to affirm the great importance that families have for the Church and the whole world and has also repeatedly highlighted how great the saving project that God intends to achieve in history through them, is.

He began his speech by reminding the people present first of all their common ecclesial identity and their baptism that makes them family with Christ and God. The Church is both the "family of families" and a "family of families". Therefore, He encouraged parents to ask for baptism for their children as soon as possible, so that they too can experience the joy of being "the family of God" from an early age. The words of the Pope teach that each of us is called today to rediscover the beauty of his being the People of God and Body of Christ; but this cannot remain just a thought or a feeling, but must be translated into an active and constant presence within one's own parish community.

Then Pope Francis revealed what God's desire is for every family: He wants each one of them to be "a beacon that radiates the joy of his love in the world". Each member of the family, after having experienced the love of God that saves, is called to spread it in the world. God has revealed his love to us in Jesus Christ and in his Word. How then must families spread God's love in the world? Announcing the Gospel of Christ with words and example.

This obviously requires that within each

family unit love, forgiveness, peace, unity, harmony, dialogue and conjugal fidelity are lived. In prayer one draws strength to love one another and remain united even in difficult moments. Love must be revealed through little things, in the simple gestures proper to the daily routine, such as knowing how to apologize humbly or caress the other to be reconciled after an argument.

Another important principle worth noting by the Holy Father is the sound use of social media in the family, effective means to build a dense network of relationships, even "among families", for the purposes of evangelization, but which we must never enjoy excessively losing sight of true relationships, those "of flesh and blood".

Young people, "nephews", new generations must not waste the opportunity to offer a closeness to the older members of their family, "grandparents", but must be able to value the moments of dialogue and confrontation with them, that are also a real treasure of wisdom and experience.

However, families must live the mission by being inserted in the parish and carrying out a generous service in it, in communion with the parish priest and the other members, also taking care to invite other families to participate in Sunday Mass and the life of the community.

May the Virgin Mary help families to fulfil God's desire for them.

**Father Felice Raffaele**

The  
Lord's Day  
ROMAN RITE

WHOEVER CAUSES ONE  
OF THESE LITTLE ONES TO SIN  
(XXVI SUNDAY O.T. YEAR B)

**ARE YOU JEALOUS FOR MY SAKE?**  
(Num 11,25-29)

In order not to be jealous of the Holy Spirit acting in others, we must start from a universal basic principle. The Holy Spirit that has regenerated us knows what we are capable of doing and what we will never be able to do, according to our new nature. He gives each gift according to our particular, personal nature. If he gave us another gift, he would put on our shoulders a burden that we could never carry. Jealousy towards the gifts of the Holy Spirit attests that we think from the flesh and not according to the Spirit of the Lord. Moses knows how difficult it is to lead the Lord's people because it thinks from the flesh and not from faith. If all were prophets, they would think from faith and not from the flesh. His work would lighten a lot. It would not be heavy. Instead, Joshua wished all the weight to be on Moses. He still does not think according to the faith, but according to the flesh. He must still grow in the things concerning the Lord.

**YOUR WEALTH HAS ROTTED AWAY**  
(Jas 5: 1-6)

The Apostle James knows the thought of Christ Jesus. He knows what he says in his Gospel about wealth. Every good of the earth is used to acquire an immense glory in the eternal skies. Using the goods of the earth only for ourselves, deprives us of eternal glory and prevents us even today from using them for our benefit. We use them for our death and not for our lives. What is not necessary for our body according to the virtue of temperance and sobriety, becomes a work of injustice granting it to it. If it is injustice it is also a sin. Not only that. One lives

in a discordant way from the Gospel that he professes. We proclaim ourselves disciples of the Lord and we are not, because He has given everything of himself for our lives. He kept nothing for his person. He put everything at disposal for our eternal salvation. In addition, what we accumulate always rots. It is also as if it disappeared and for this reason we become more greedy and unjust. Nothing satisfies us.

**IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN**  
(Mk 9,38-43.45.47-48)

Jesus does not want his disciples to be operators of scandals. In order for this to never happen, they must keep themselves in his truth, in his love, in his justice and in his Gospel. What to do so that one never gets out of the Gospel, thinks and acts contrary to it? The path indicated by the Master is of true eternal wisdom and it is timeless. Jesus was tempted to come out of the Father's will and followed the will of the prince of the world. But he was always in communion of grace, truth and obedience with the Father, in the Holy Spirit. He never passed into the anti-gospel of Satan. Here is the rule of Jesus: staying in the truth and never getting out of it. Living in the Gospel and never living in other places. If the disciple of Jesus either with his eyes or his body goes to live in other places, he gets out of the Gospel and acquires the thought of the world. When one thinks according to the world, he also acts according to the world. We are attracted by scandals. Life is not preserved from them. Staying in the Gospel also physically is obligatory for those who want not to be conquered by the world.

*by the theologian,*  
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