

THE SMILE OF GOD

In Palermo with Pope Francis in the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of Blessed Pino Puglisi

On September 15th in the city of Palermo, on the occasion of Pope Francis' pastoral visit for the 25th anniversary of the death of Blessed Pino Puglisi, we were also present as young people of the Apostolic Movement. We responded enthusiastically to the invitation of the Archbishop of Catanzaro-Squillace, Msgr. Vincenzo Bertolone, who invited young people from the Archdiocese to the event. Together with Fr. Davide Marino, who guided us in this experience, we shared joy, both in moments of youthful leisure and in those of prayer and even reflection on the Homily: "Twenty-five years ago as today, when he died on the day of his birthday, he crowned his victory with a smile, with that smile that did not make his killer sleep at night, who said: "there was a kind of light in that smile"».

The object of our thought was the light present in the smile of Fr. Pino, a priest who gave his life to fight the evil of the mafia that is present everywhere today. Giving life: no one can give a bigger love than this. However, before being a gift to others, it is necessary to be enriched from the source of eternal life, the Word of God, the instrument of salvation that we receive during Mass. We are called to put into practice his teaching and to observe, not only, in complete obedience, that

Word of life, but also to pay attention to what we have achieved, so that we are sure that it is right according to God. Therefore, to become better, we must not postpone our commitments and run away from our responsibilities but be obedient witnesses of Christ.

Only this way can we become his instruments and enrich ourselves with him. Wealth has been another object of our reflection: "the shroud has no pockets", a call launched aloud by our Pope, with which he reminds us what the true wealth really is, not the one that a mafia man can get on this earth, but the eternal one, the one we can take with us, to be reborn to new life with Him. The mafia man cannot be called a Christian because he does not give life but takes it away. He is not the smile of God but he is tears of pain, he is not an instrument of peace but of violence and does not love his brother but hates him.

Today we are called to decide whether to live for ourselves or to give our lives for others, but we must be aware that only by giving it we can overcome evil, although it is a high price.

The Holy Father reminded us of the need for so many "priests and so many smiley Christians" to take care of their duties and put themselves joyfully at the service of God. Fr. Pino's smile has never died out and so it must also be for us. We are the smile of God, let us not put it off, it is the only light of the world and a sign of hope.

For us young people in particular, that can often make our smile be stolen by worldly things: let us remember who we believed in, let us remember who daily we give our "yes" to and we will become perfect "jewels of Jesus", this "luminous" name that was given us by our Inspirer.

Francesca Mellace and Marco Bagnato



Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Faced with this solemn prophecy of Jesus, it is right that we ask ourselves: why is it difficult to enter the kingdom of God? It is difficult because the way for each man comes from the Word of the Gospel and from the Holy Spirit. Not only from the Gospel, but also from the Spirit of the Lord. The Gospel reveals to us the truth to be transformed into our life. The Holy Spirit shows us the concrete ways to go through to reach the kingdom of God. There are no universal ways, every man has his own way. It is given by the sacrament that is received, by the gift of grace and by the specific mission of each one. If the sacrament can be the same for everyone, the gift of grace and the mission are always different. Everyone receives a special gift of the Spirit and a special mission to fulfil. The Gospel must be lived according to the gift of grace and the mission. This also applies to the commandments.

The way of the Commandments is indicated to the man who presents himself and asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Since he says he has been observing the Commandments since his youth, Jesus announces him that he lacks only one thing to be able to enter the kingdom of God. He must go, sell what he has and give it to the poor. With this first action he has a treasure in heaven. He loses nothing of what he has. Having done this, he must come and follow the Master. Here is the word of Jesus: "You only miss one thing: go, sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven; and come! Follow me!". The Spirit by the mouth of Jesus reveals to

this man what the way of his eternal salvation is. If he wants to inherit eternal life, he must detach himself from all his goods, give them to the poor, offer his life for the building up of the kingdom of God. The man does not accept this life. He knows that that is the only true one for him. He goes away sad. His many goods prevent him from surrendering to the will of the Holy Spirit.

Here is why it is difficult to enter the kingdom of God. To every man Jesus asks for the denial of himself. He asks to free himself from his true wealth which does not consist in material goods. The true wealth of man is his thought and his will, which make him a true image and likeness of God. He frees himself from his mind, his thoughts, his will, his heart and his human planning, to embrace only the will of the Father manifested to him by Christ Jesus, in his Gospel, and revealed by the Holy Spirit through his gifts of grace and his particular vocation. The way of the kingdom of heaven for some is that of the remembrance of the Word, other ways are not given, other ways are not viable, they do not lead to the kingdom of God. If on this way the Holy Spirit has given each one particular charismas and tasks, respect for charismas and tasks is necessary to inherit the kingdom of God. Other ways do not lead to the kingdom, but to eternal perdition. You cannot joke with eternal fire. Mother of God, Woman always obedient to the Holy Spirit, teach those you have called and calls for the remembrance of the Word, that obedience to the mission is the only viable way to reach eternal salvation.

Father Costantino Di Bruno

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THEOLOGY AND TENDERNESS

Reflections starting from the Speech of H.H. Francis at the Convention of the Family centre "Home of Tenderness" (13.9.2018)

To the participants in the National Convention on the theme "Theology of tenderness", Pope Francis first wanted to underline the link between the two terms in question: theology and tenderness are inextricably linked because theology communicates the concreteness of God this very day and expresses the love, attention and affection that God nourishes for the salvation of every man.

The service of theology must respond as much as possible to the concrete man; in this sense "the approach to vital questions no longer starts from the last questions or from social needs, but from what the person feels emotionally". "Emotionally" is not to be understood as vague sentimentality, but as a search for meaning. Theology, which gives the light of the Word of God, can and must speak to the man of today who lives a certain history and in certain existential situations, helping him to discover the will and tenderness of God.

Divine tenderness is an expression of the infinite charity of God. Jesus Christ, the eternal Word incarnate, is the perfect incarnation of this charity, as the only Saviour of all men. Then, doing theology is not only treating theoretical things in relation to faith, but it is considering man in his present condition and accompanying him "in his existential search by bringing the light that comes from the Word of God". In this sense, theology is also an act of great charity because it interprets the Word of God, making it clear that its truth touches man in his history and in his experience. This is possible, "because the love of God is not an abstract general, but a personal and concrete principle, that the Holy Spirit communicates in the intimate".

To this call, in the intimacy of man, on the

part of the Spirit, the act of faith must follow, that is, the full adherence of man to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. It is here that the Spirit "reaches and transforms the feelings and thoughts of man", a necessary condition for him to be able to feel, in his conscience, the voice of God that questions him and calls him to the full participation of the divine life.

In the theology of tenderness we can understand two essential aspects: "the beauty of feeling loved by God and the beauty of feeling to love in the name of God".

Tenderness refers to the Passion of Jesus. The Cross invites us to reflect on the love of God that knows no bounds, a love capable of being made a gift, on the part of the Son of God, for the good of all men: "Tenderness far from being reduced to sentimentalism, is the first step to overcome the folding on the self, to get out of self-centeredness that disfigures human freedom".

Every Christian is called to discover the captivating and attractive force of tenderness, which helps him "to pour into the world the love received from the Lord, to decline it in the Church, in the family, in society, to combine it in serving and giving ourselves".

Theology must deepen the dynamism of tenderness, always putting in relation God and man, above all helping this to rediscover himself loved by God and to encourage him to offer his serving in the ecclesial community.

May the Mother of tenderness bless all families and Ecclesial Communities so that they may become the unmistakable sign of the eternal love and tenderness of the Most Holy Trinity.

Father Alessandro Carioti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

NO ONE IS GOOD BUT GOD ALONE
(XXVIII SUNDAY O.T. YEAR B)

I PRAYED, AND PRUDENCE WAS GIVEN ME (Wis 7,7-11)

Wisdom is that immediate light that comes down to us from the Holy Spirit and that allows us to see the truth of the end and means of our every action, decision, project and even desire. Since every action has its purpose and its means, for every action to be done, for every decision to be made, we must be enlightened by the wisdom that comes from God and for this we must pray without any interruption. What is the end of our life? Leading it into the eternal kingdom of God. What are the means at our disposal? It is the Gospel to which we grant obedience and the grace that gives us all strength to make sure that the word of Jesus is transformed into our life. Means are still the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the particular vocation that is the way on which to walk. If we do not invoke wisdom every day, we immediately lose the eternal end. Having lost the eternal end, also the means are left out. You walk for death.

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING (Heb 4: 12-13)

The Letter to the Hebrews announces a truth that we must never forget. Our first fundamental, essential and substantial wisdom is the Word of the Lord: "The word of God is alive, effective and sharper than any double-edged sword; it penetrates to the point of division of the soul and the spirit, to the joints and the marrow and discerns the feelings and thoughts of the heart. There is no creature that can hide before God, but everything is naked and bare in the eyes of him to whom we must give account". But is the Word enough to be wise?

If it were enough, all those who make profession of evangelical faith would be extremely wise. The Word of the Lord alone is not enough. We need the Apostles of Jesus in hierarchical communion with the Pope to explain it. It is necessary for the Holy Spirit to write his truth in our heart. The grace of the sacraments and prayer are obligatory for us to live it.

YOU ARE LACKING IN ONE THING (Mk 10: 17-30)

A rich man asks Jesus to show him the way to inherit eternal life. Jesus replies him that the path of eternal life is the commandments. The man attests that he has kept the commandments from his youth. Jesus replies him that the commandments are not enough for him. He misses one thing. For him, the path to eternal life consists in this: going, selling everything he owns and giving the money to the poor. He will have a treasure in heaven. Then come and follow him, Jesus. This is his way. If he really wants to inherit eternal life, he will have to walk on it. This man refuses it because he had many goods. But Jesus had not told him to abandon his possessions. But to turn them into an eternal treasure. He would have left nothing. He would have earned them all. But now his goods serve him only for this land, just as they served the rich villain. Then eternal perdition will come. He will lose the goods over time and the goods in eternity. It is urgent that everyone asks himself: do I know what the path the Lord has set out for me to inherit eternal life one day?

by the theologian,
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