

Catanzaro: Concert for Peace

In the light of Pope Francis' message for the 52nd World Day of Peace, the young people and children of the Apostolic Movement gave the diocesan community a moment of joy and meditation with a Christmas inspired concert.

Two shows on the evening of 4 January (at 6 and 9 pm), which recorded a very large audience in the "Casalinuovo" auditorium. Many were the people to applaud the "Concert of Peace", conceived and directed by Cettina Marraffa, with the collaboration of expert musicians, and staged by many young people and children who have created great harmony.

Being together with families and the ecclesial community, to share the common desire for peace before a new year that has just begun and awaits the commitment and co-responsibility of all. A constant commitment that young people and children have been able to manifest well with singing and dialoguing, highlighting the effectiveness of the Word of the Lord, capable of illuminating, vivifying and consolidating the life of every human being and of every family.

Associations and institutions that serve fragile people also participated in the evening; with their presence they have transmitted a great emotion in the hall, making the message be understood that everyone always needs the other for the common good.

At the end of the evening, the Metropolitan Archbishop, Monsignor Vincenzo

Bertolone, affirmed that; he thanked Cettina Marraffa, the musicians, the youngsters and the little artists together with their families.

"Peace - Monsignor Bertolone said - is a noble sentiment. Tonight we all have peace in our hearts. I really thank everyone and I say to everyone: keep this passion for good, for singing and for joy. Peace cultivate it in the family. Teach children how to forgive, to have true relationship with their companions, to respect the given word, to be generous and loyal; to be at peace with the personal conscience and with the Lord. Only in this way, from one Christmas to the next, Christ will grow in us and peace will grow with Christ and we will become men of peace". A special greeting during the evening was addressed to the founder and inspirer Maria Marino, absent for years to public events for reasons of health, but always spiritually present supporting the journey of the Apostolic Movement that from Catanzaro, where it was founded in 1979, has reached Italian and foreign dioceses with the charisma of "reminding the Word of the Lord to the world".

The following associations and institutions intervened as guests, with performances and testimonies:

- Italian Association of Down People - Sect. of Catanzaro
- Association of Villa Gioia Onlus - Catanzaro
- Choir "Voices of Light" of the Italian Blind and Visually Impaired Union - Sect. of Catanzaro
- National Deaf Organization - Section of Catanzaro
- Residential structure Salus Mentis - Sellia Marina (CZ)

Irene Brancaccio, a down person, consecrated laywoman in the Secular Institute Mary Mother of the Redemption, participated with the exhibition of some of her paintings

He sent me to bring the good news to the poor

The poor in the Gospel and in all of Scripture or Revelation are clothed with a twofold connotation: it is a theological and also an anthropological category. Poverty is absence, lack and deprivation. Since man is unity between body, soul and spirit, the poverties are three: poverty of the soul, poverty of the spirit and poverty of the body. The mission of Jesus is aimed at freeing man from the poverty of the soul and the spirit. As a sign of these two liberations he has also healed the body from multiple illnesses and infirmities. But every healing is a sign, not an end of the mission of Jesus. His Father takes care of the liberation of all body poverty. Some modalities are proper to the Father. Others are of men and they are revealed in holy Scripture.

Jesus came to free from the poverty of the soul. The soul of man lies in death, it is poor because it lacks in the supernatural life, the grace. It is devoid of the God Trinity that is its life, its breath and its sap that makes it grow, develop and produce fruits of true holiness. The sanctity of the soul is its full conformation in the love of the Father, through the grace of Christ Jesus and through the communion of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came for this reason: to proclaim to the poor in the soul that God wants to return to dwell in it with all the power of his divine and eternal charity, so as to transform every man into the perfect image of his love, his piety, mercy, forgiveness and compassion. For Jesus, all of God is infused into the soul and man through his body will manifest

the greatness of this love, letting himself be conformed every day to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, always in the Son and for him and with him. All of this is operated by the Spirit of Lord Jesus.

Then there is the other poverty: that of the spirit. It is devoid of true light, which is knowledge of the true mystery of God and consequently of the true mystery of man. Christ Jesus comes to give his Holy Spirit that is the true light, the knowledge and the perfect science of the mystery. Walking in the Spirit, man walks in the truth, light, justice and knowledge of the perfect will of the Father. In every moment, he will not only know what good and what evil are, but also what his vocation is so that he can consecrate his life to the realization of the perfect good. Jesus evangelizes even the poverty of the body: inviting the poor to live their privation, in the faith in the Father of heaven, who knows what is needed and already provides. But when does the Father provide? When man seeks the kingdom of God and his justice. With whom does he provide? With all his children that live looking for the kingdom of God and his justice. The poverty of the body is taken away, only if the poverty of the soul and the spirit are taken away. Having removed the spiritual poverty, the other poverty is lived in the love of the Father, in the grace of Christ, in the communion of the Holy Spirit. Mother of God, the Woman poor in spirit, obtain all of us the poverty in spirit and humility.

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THE NOURISHMENT OF THE WORLD IS BORN IN THE "CITY OF BREAD"

*Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis
in the Mass of Christmas Eve (12.24.2018)*

The mystery that surrounds the Christmas feast is great. It requires the light of the Holy Spirit to be well understood and accepted according to truth. Without an indispensable evangelization of Christmas, there is the risk of making it a pretext to justify innumerable initiatives, sometimes even religious ones, that disfigure the authentic meaning of Christmas.

At Christmas the Church contemplates the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, the Redeemer of the world. In Jesus, God comes to offer a last and improcrastinable offering of salvation to humanity. Who welcomes the Emmanuel welcomes salvation, who approaches him with approximation, or even refuses him, seriously questions not only his life in time, but eternity itself.

In Bethlehem, "the house of bread", the Messiah is born: "Bethlehem is the turning point to change the course of history. There God, in the house of bread, is born in a manger. As to tell us: here I am to you, as your food. He does not take, he offers food; he does not give anything, but himself. In Bethlehem we discover that God is not someone who takes life, but He who gives life». (Homily)

The gesture of the Virgin Mary of laying Jesus in the manger is full of prophecy. Who bends down to eat in that crib is the one who has understood the mystery of life. Bending over before the manger means recognizing in the humility of that child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid there, the Word of God who became flesh. Drawing from this manger expresses having understood that Christ Jesus is true nourishment for man, true food that supports the journey of life.

"In Bethlehem we discover that the life of

God flows in the veins of humanity. If we welcome it, history changes starting from each of us. Because when Jesus changes the heart, the centre of life is no longer my hungry and selfish ego, but He, who is born and lives for love". (Homily)

Eating Christ Jesus does not mean, as many today intend, eating only the Eucharist. Eating Jesus means eating His own life, His Word, His mission, His passion of death and resurrection. With the life of Christ, man must nourish his own life to produce fruits of conversion: eating Christ means eating His will.

Eating the Word of God, nourishing oneself of the Word, making of the Word the food of one's own body as if it were bread, means moving towards a process of transformation of oneself into Word. The more we eat the Word, the more we can say the Word, the less we eat it and the less we say it. Eating and saying are a single work and a single action, which must not be done once but repeated every moment of one's life. Only by nourishing ourselves of the Gospel can we be faithful announcers of the mystery of Christmas, without falling into the temptation of replacing the heart of God with our own heart.

Therefore, Christmas gives anthropological, Christological, ecclesiological, theological, pneumatological and eschatological truth to the whole of humanity. Through the incarnation of His Son, God wants to renew, vivify and resuscitate man, he wants to transform him into a garden of life.

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, lead your every Son to the manger of life so that, in obedience to the will of God, the only Word of eternal life can resound among us.

Father Rocco Lombardo

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**THE EYES OF ALL LOOKED INTENTLY AT HIM
(III Sunday O.T. – Year C)**

**LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO THE
BOOK OF THE LAW (Ne 8,2-4a.5-6.8-10)**

There has never been and never will there be true reform in the people of God and in the Church of the Lord, if we do not start from the Book of the Law and verse by verse we do not explain what is contained in it. The teacher who reads and explains can also err in interpreting a verse, but then there are a thousand others on which no error will be possible. We are in a moment of great religious, moral and social confusion. Nehemiah knows that only by putting the book of the Law back into the heart of the people all confusion might be eliminated. He summons all the people, not a category, but indiscriminately everyone, even the children who could understand; he has the book of the Law read and explained. All the people listen, not a few and not many. One Law, one explanation, one people and one will of God. Today instead it is the word of the individual that becomes law and truth, text and understanding. Thus, the tower of Babel is born.

**YOU ARE CHRIST'S BODY
(1Cor 12, 12-30)**

Saint Paul reveals to the Corinthians what their Law is: that of the body alone. Every baptized in Christ Jesus, by the Holy Spirit is grafted into the body of Christ and made a member of it. As in the body every member gives life to all the other members and from all the other members receives life, so it must be in the body of Christ that is the Church in every particular community in which everyone lives as an essential part of her. What life must each member give to the other members and what life must he receive from all the other members? That given to him and the others by the Holy Spi-

rit. For the life given by the Spirit through his manifold gifts or charismas can be given and received, it is necessary to eliminate from our own body, soul and spirit every vice and every transgression of the Law of the Lord. Without a strong path of asceticism, the gift of the Spirit is suffocated by the thorns of evil and no fruit might ever be offered or received.

**THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME
(Lk 1,1-4; 4,13-21).**

Jesus enters the synagogue of Nazareth, opens the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, finds a prophecy about his person and the law. After having proclaimed it with great solemnity, he adds that today what the audience had listened to is fulfilled. What does this fulfilment consist of? In being Him, Jesus, the Person of whom the prophecy speaks. The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him. From this moment on He will be led, moved and guided, so that what is written in the prophecy can be fully realized. There is a world without God, devoid of any supernatural life. He must proclaim this world that the Lord is ready to realize for it every promise of good, salvation, redemption, liberation from every darkness of death, from every bondage of sin and from every poverty of grace and truth. Jesus is the instrument. The Lord is the one who works through him. The one who leads Jesus in the realization of the will of God is the Holy Spirit. Everything is the work of the Father, through Christ Jesus, in the Holy Spirit. Jesus comes to give the Father back to men. He gives him by giving the Word and the grace of the Father back.

*by the theologian,
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno*