

## SPIRITUAL NOTES

### TEMPERANCE

In previous issues, Fr. Antonio Severino used the image of "soul tattoos" to reflect on virtues. After having considered prudence, he now introduces us to temperance.

The second design we can get tattooed by the Holy Spirit is the "balance". It helps us understand well another of the four cardinal virtues which is temperance. This virtue enables us to have an impartial, "balanced", just and holy use of things.

Let's think today about the use of social media, mobile phones, computers, every technology and science product. Whoever possesses the balance of temperance manages not to "lean" either on the "old" side, considering all that is produced today as a damage to humanity, or on the "new" by letting himself be governed and determined life in a total way by the things of this time. Here is what Jesus tells us: "For this reason every scribe, having become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven, is like a master of the house who extracts from his treasure new things and old things" (Mt 13:52).

Temperance helps us to be free from things, not to be dependent on them, not to consider things as a drug that we can't do without. In fact, many are those who become "slaves" of things, their prisoners. The relationship with things cannot take precedence over the relationship with others, with real and true people.

Another "thing" we must make good use of, is time. Today it is said that you have never time to do everything there is to be done. I think it is enough to stop for a moment every now and then and reflect, separating the primary from the secondary things, the necessary ones from those that "don't change your life". A time that must never fail, which is of primary importance, which is necessary for our life is that to be dedicated to the Lord, to Holy Mass, to prayer, to formation in His Word and to growth in virtues.

Everything serves our lives, everything can become positive or negative from the use we make of it (a knife can be used to cut bread and therefore a sign of communion or to take a life away) for this reason we need the virtue of temperance, to have the government on things instead of letting ourselves be governed by them.

Let us pray every day so that the Lord may help us grow in this virtue and outline this balance into our spirit.

**Father Antonio Severino**

## You will find a tied foal

Our God does not speak only with his eternal Word, but also with signs. They accompany the Word and give it full meaning. The Lord did not speak to Pharaoh with a treatise on dogmatic theology. He would have thought that they were only vain, useless words and concepts developed by the human mind. Instead, he spoke to him with ten powerful signs, through which he revealed to him that He is the only God, the only Lord and the only Almighty, to whom every other "created, thought and imagined omnipotence by man" will have to bend. The first ones to surrender were the magicians of Egypt. They discovered that their omnipotence was very limited and they stopped. Instead, pharaoh wanted to challenge the Lord to the end and he with his army perished among the waves of the Red Sea, which withdrew at the command of Moses.

The Lord spoke also to his people with miraculous signs, so that it could believe that all his Word is fulfilled infallibly. But not even his people had faith in the truth of its God. The sign ended and the faith ended. Another sign was needed to revive the faith, but then it immediately faded away again and God was disowned. Jesus is the Holy One of God, his Christ and his Messiah. He does not come to put men against each other, he does not come to conquer. He comes to attract. How does he attract? Through a sign which is foolishness to the Greeks and it is a scandal to the Jews. His sign is his cross. Until the end of the world and for eternity the Crucifix will be the sign of true humanity. He might save man only

who lets himself be crucified for man. Instead, who crucifies is a sign of the power of evil, whose strength is drawn from Satan. While the strength of the crucified is drawn from God and his Holy Spirit. When man moves away from this path, when he will be ashamed, he will be scandalized, he will declare it foolishness and ignorance, then it is a sign that the crucifiers in the body or in the spirit have increased dramatically. Today many people crucify man in his spirit, while pretending to help him in his body. Having crucified the spirit, man is the victim of his executioners.

Today, Jesus enters Jerusalem. He does not enter on a chariot of a winner with the army behind him in defence of his kingdom. He enters sitting on a colt, a beast of burden, a humble donkey and moreover still inexperienced in the work of the fields. This sign speaks more than all the prophetic Scriptures. He comes to serve, not to dominate. He comes as a king of peace, not of war. He comes in humility, not in pride. He comes in smallness, not in greatness. In front of a man sitting on a donkey nobody must be afraid. He is a person incapable of doing harm. Even if he wanted to, he couldn't. All the empires and kingdoms of this world have nothing to fear. Jesus does not even come like Moses to tell Pilate: "Free my people. Leave my land." Pilate can govern in peace. Jesus comes to teach every man how to live of humility, the virtue that makes man a friend of man. Mother of the Redemption, most humble woman, help us, your children, to imitate you and Christ Jesus.

**Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno**

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## PUTTING CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL BACK AT THE CENTRE

### *Reflections starting from the Message of H.H. Francis for Lent 2019*

When the blessed Trinity, in its love, wanted to come out of itself to give the being to the universe and to everyone living present in it, it placed man as lord of creation, establishing that from his intimate and personal relationship with Itself, the subsistence of the whole creation in the good, in the order and in its predetermined end, depended.

We know from the Genesis account, this relationship was characterized by being a relationship of trust and obedience to the word of command given to him by his Creator. Subsisting in it, the spirit of man would have remained in justice and could have progressed in good, governed and led his body into justice and relate himself in justice and holiness also with other men and with the whole of creation.

However we know from the revelation that the man decided to disobey, placing himself in a state of "in-justice" towards the Creator. Thus, when the relationship of dependence on the one Source of his being was interrupted, even the relation of the spirit of man to his body, to his neighbour and to the entire creation, failed in any possibility of good, justice and holiness: "We know that the cause of all evil is sin, which since its appearance among men has interrupted communion with God, with others and with creation, to which we are linked above all through our body. By breaking the communion with God, the harmonious relationship between human beings and the environment in which they are called to live has also broken down, so that the garden was transformed into a desert (see Gen 3,17-18)" (Message).

But in his wisdom God himself came to our rescue. In fact the Word of God, in the fullness of time, took on human nature and lived his relationship with the heavenly Father in perfect dependence on him, in an obedience to death by the cross. Thus, Jesus manifested himself as the supremely righteous and perfect man in charity, to whom we must all look. By virtue of his Passover he is the Redeemer of man, and daily, the Church, offers us the gift of the Spirit of the Son that makes us "new creatures", grafting us vitally and substantially in Christ the perfect man, so that in Him our relationship with God, with man and with creation can return to the state of justice and be supernaturally transfigured into a relationship of sonship: "If man lives as a child of God, if he lives as a redeemed person, that lets himself be guided by the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:14) and knows how to recognize and put into practice the law of God, beginning with that inscribed in his heart and in nature, he also does good to creation, cooperating in its redemption. For this reason the creation - St. Paul says - has as a very intense desire that the children of God are manifested [...] accepting in the concrete of our life the victory of Christ over sin and death, we will also attract his transforming force onto creation" (Message). May the Lent we have lived serve all of us to put Christ and his Gospel back at the centre, in that he is the only source of new life and new relationship with God, with themselves, with the neighbour and with creation. Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, help us on our journey of conversion to Christ.

**Father Emmanuele Rotundo**

**The  
Lord's Day  
ROMAN RITE**

**IF THEY KEEP SILENT, THE STONES WILL CRY OUT!  
(PALM SUNDAY - Year C)**

**I GAVE MY BACK TO THOSE WHO  
BEAT ME (Is 50: 4-7)**

The ancient prophecies almost always announce the Christ of God in the clothes of the persecuted, pierced just, they see him as a sheep dumb before its shearers, like a lamb led to the slaughter. Today Isaiah presents him in the guise of a scourged, insulted, derided and beaten man. But he does not rebel, he is not opposed to both physical and spiritual evil caused to his person. He endures it all with love and for love. He lives everything by making it his own. Where does all this strength that pushes him to consign himself to evil in every form and manifestation come from? Strength comes to him from the Lord, from his God who assists him. In truth it is only by the grace of God that all injustices can be lived, remaining in the greatest love. But one must grow in the grace of the Lord. We know that Jesus grew in wisdom and grace. The strength of the Holy Spirit has enveloped him. With this strength he was able to surrender to the death of the cross.

**BECOMING OBEDIENT TO DEATH,  
EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS (Phil 2,6-11)**  
St. Paul urges the Philippians to imitate Christ Jesus in his great humility. He is God, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, the Almighty, the Lord, the Creator of man, the light, life, truth and grace. Christ is everything and everything is in Christ and for Christ. Well, Jesus did not rebel against the injuries, ridicule, scorn, scourging and crucifixion. On the contrary, he became obedient, obliterating and annihilating himself, until his death on the cross. What is the principle of faith that sustains this highest humility? His life was given to the Father by him. The Father wants to make of it a holocaust and a sacrifice of reconci-

liation, redemption, salvation and communion. If he is a victim of expiation, he must give himself entirely to death. Glory, Lordship, Power, Honour, Blessing and Exaltation will come later. They will be the fruit of his great humiliation. Either one looks at Christ Crucified and asks to imitate him, or pride will rule the hearts and will make them deviate.

**WERE SPREADING THEIR CLOAKS ON  
THE ROAD (Lk 19.28-40)**

Fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah, Jesus presents himself to his people as a humble king of peace, concord and communion among men. Humility always creates peace and communion, unity and harmony and justice and truth. Instead, pride creates divisions, discords, wars, quarrels and even ideological conflicts. Humility is a gift of the Holy Spirit and produces very pure obedience to the Law of the Lord. Instead, pride is a gift of Satan and generates every kind of disobedience to the Law of God. Whoever wants to be an operator of peace and justice, in the truth that comes from God, must become one body with Christ, remain in him and live for him, letting himself be moved by the Holy Spirit that is the Spirit of Lord Jesus. But those who are following Jesus know nothing and understand nothing of this great mystery. They need a king and paint him as they please. They do not know that Jesus will rule the world as the Crucifix, from the wood of the cross. The mystery of Jesus was not understood yesterday and it is not understood today. Even today everyone is thinking of Christ according to the thoughts of his heart.

*by the theologian,  
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno*