

Notes - Father Francesco Cristofaro: a new book on prayer

Lord I pray to you with my heart - Tau Publisher - is the new book by Father Francesco Cristofaro, radio-television host and parish priest in the Catanzaro-Squillace Diocese.

The preface is signed by the journalist Luigi Ferraiuolo, with whom he collaborates on TV2000, and the premise is by Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno, Central Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Apostolic Movement.

This book is an invitation to find the self in prayer, in a sincere and full of faith dialogue with the Lord God. The author takes as a starting point some psalms and, through reading and commenting on them, retraces a journey in and out of himself. At any time and on every page the reader will have the opportunity to mirror himself and to examine and question his personal journey of faith. At the end of this journey you will surely come out enriched, hand in hand with God to continue the journey.

"Every day - Father Cristofaro says - on my social profiles I receive dozens and dozens of requests for prayer, from the simplest ones such as support for an exam to be taken at the University, but also very serious requests such as the desire for motherhood, a tough battle with cancer, the suffering of a loved one and much more. I answer all of them: "I pray for you. Let me know. Pray with me too and pray with

your heart". And that is how a spiritual accompaniment, a knowledge and a friendship begin. I believe that prayer is like oxygen for human life. Who does not pray is as a lost person. I believe that prayer forms and transforms».

In the book there is the story of King David. With his sin of adultery and murder he lost God, the most precious good for him. He prays with his heart and cries out to the Lord all his misery and poverty. Praying with the heart means having the ability to move the very heart of God. The words on the lips stir a breeze. A heart that prays creates an earthquake in the sky. "In the book I myself take the reader by the hand and, using some episodes of my life and some psalms, we walk together along a path of inner knowledge".

"Looking back on my life," Father Francesco says, "I see like a pencil drawing a project of love. Jesus is the one holding the pencil. I have a thousand reasons to bless the Lord. I bless him because he loved me, he loves me and will love me again. I bless him because he used mercy for me. I bless him because in his hands my weaknesses are strength. I bless him for these thirteen years of priestly ministry. I bless him for every single meeting, for every single story and life. I bless him because 26 years ago I met a woman who taking me by my hand taught me how to pray, to pray with the heart and she made me know the way of the gospel and of the Church. This woman, Mrs. Maria Marino, is the Inspirer and Founder of the Apostolic Movement. If today I am what I am, a priest in love with God, with the Holy Virgin and with the Church, it is thanks to her, because she has always recommended me to be a holy priest ».



God has been glorified in him

From Jesus, God, his Father received all glory and honour. He has always confessed him as his one and only Lord, consecrating to him all his life, dedicating himself to obedience until his death. This is the worship that our God wants: that we always do his will, that we listen to his voice, that we walk in his Law and that we never depart from his precepts. We confess and glorify Him. He confesses our truth before every man and glorifies it on earth, with his blessing and every other grace; in eternity, making us partakers of his glory. We exalt Him. He exalts us. We glorify Him. He glorifies us. We celebrate his Lordship. He celebrates our raising in his tent of eternal light.

Today this truth is obscured by the immanentism with which we have darkened our human existence. We have stripped ourselves of the sky to dress ourselves of the earth. We stopped wearing the clothes of the supernatural to cover ourselves with the mere rags of the natural. We have replaced the sound theological, Christic and pneumatological anthropology with an anthropology in which we want to redeem the person with the things of the earth. Never might the earth redeem a man. The one who redeems is only the Lord, only Christ Jesus, through the work of his Holy Spirit. Either we bring man back into Christ, to place him in the heart of the Father, because there his eternal place is, or we have failed our mission as Christians and witnesses to Lord Jesus. Our Christ has done everything to raise man into the heart of the Father, bringing him first into his heart. If

man is deprived of this eternal vocation, we make of him one thing among things, but not a man whose present and future is only in God, in Christ, for Christ, with Christ and in the Holy Spirit. A truly miserable mission ours is if we reduce it to a fact of earth for the earth. Instead it is a supernatural, Christic, heavenly, divine and eternal event.

Who can teach this true, transcendent, eternal anthropology of celestial glory today? Only whoever lives of this anthropology. Who lives of earth cannot indicate the way to heaven, just as the immoral person cannot teach true morality. He doesn't know it and doesn't live it. He doesn't know what it is. Who lives only to give glory to God with his life, consigned to Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, can indicate men how glory is given to God and how one sets out towards eternal glory. Whoever awaits the glory that comes from men, will be condemned to shut himself up in an immanence without any hope that is nothing but that of a praise that comes from men. But it is a praise that rises to him from the earth. This praise is a miserable and ephemeral one and it does not last. The praise and the glory that come from God are a different thing. They are eternal. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consume the whole life to give glory to God with a full and perfect obedience to his Word. It is worth confessing and recognizing Christ Jesus in the same way that He knew the Father. We glorify Him and He glorifies us. Mother of the Redemption, obtain for us the grace to live and die for the glory of Christ Jesus.

Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno

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OBEDIENCE AND PASSION

*Reflections starting from the Homily of H.h. Franies
for Palm Sunday (14.4.2019)*

In the homily for Palm Sunday 2019, Pope Francis, speaking of the particular liturgical celebration that marks the beginning of the Holy Week, urged to let us be "involved in this action animated by the Holy Spirit, to obtain [...] accompanying our Saviour with faith on his way and to have the great teaching of his passion always present as the model of life and victory against the spirit of evil" (Homily).

And the essence of Christ's teaching in his Passion is fidelity, obedience to the will of the Father, without choosing alternate ways: "Jesus shows us how to face difficult moments and the most insidious temptations, keeping peace in the heart that [...] it is a trusting abandonment to the Father and to his will of salvation, life and mercy; and, in all his mission, he went through the temptation of "doing his work" choosing on His own the way and disconnecting himself from obedience to the Father. From the beginning, in the struggle of forty days in the desert, to the end, in the Passion, Jesus rejects this temptation with the obedient trust in the Father" (Homily).

But, if it is true that we are called to "let ourselves be involved" by what Christ lives in the events of passion, imitating his teaching, what does to live obedience to the will of the Father, overcoming the temptation of "doing our work" and of choosing the ways in which salvation must be accomplished, mean for us?

The first temptation is always that of thinking that we can find our salvation - a term with which we must not only understand the "final salvation", of the soul, but also that which, in Christian language, is

called the "fullness of life", on earth - even without observing the Commandments; which, after all, it does not change anything whether we live or do not live the word of Jesus, which is enough to be "honest citizens".

Instead, a second temptation concerns our "state of life", that is that particular condition, linked to our personal vocation, in which we are permanently placed by the Sacrament we have received. Thus, for example, for a wife or a husband, the temptation is to think that there can be a way of sanctification, of salvation, of true good, which is for them beyond the "only flesh" that Marriage has made them, a possible way, different than dedication and mutual fidelity, than sharing of life, with its joys and its burdens, than commitment in the care and education of children. In the same way, for a priest - but, similarly, also for a consecrated male or consecrated female person - the temptation is to see a way of carrying out his own mission as an alternative to that of the obligations assumed on the day of his own consecration, almost as if total dedication to the ministry of the Word, of the sacramental grace and of pastoral charity were not sufficient to carry out the salvation of the people that the Lord entrusts to him.

There can be moments in everyone's life when fidelity to the Lord's will becomes particularly heavy and difficult. These are the moments of our passion; moments in which we must not give up, drawing strength from the passion of Christ, certain that, as it happened for him, the offer of this suffering will produce fruits of grace and salvation.

Father Davide Marino

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT
(V EASTER SUNDAY - Year C)**

**TO PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH
(Acts 14,21b-27)**

One remains firm in the faith, if he remains planted forever in the Word of the Lord. If the wind of temptation uproots us from the Gospel, we will not have stability, we will be swept away by the wind of the flesh and we will abandon ourselves to every vice and sinful work. How can we stand firm in the Word? Believing in it as the true Word of God and true Word of eternal life. But also believing that another word of life does not exist, has never existed and will never exist. Furthermore, we remain steadfast, giving each other strength. The Christian who isolates himself, who is isolated, might hardly remain steadfast in faith. Every disciple of Jesus must be strength for the other, in the perfect exemplarity of a life entirely consigned to obedience to the word. Instead, the Christian is often weakness and scandal for the other person. A single scandal drags more souls into evil than a thousand examples of fidelity to the good. Everyone must pay attention so that he only does good and does not sin.

**BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW
(Rev 21,1-5a)**

The first new thing that the Lord does, before making heaven and earth new, is man, the creature made by Him in his image and likeness. Man is made new in Christ Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit, with the mediation of grace and truth of the Apostles and priests. Apostles and presbyters are necessary for God to make man new. In the sacraments they make him the body of Christ, conforming him to his mystery of death and resurrection, with the Word of truth and light, they reveal to man

how he will have to walk from light to light if he wants to reach the eternal dwellings, or the heavenly Jerusalem which will be the new city created by God as the home of those who let themselves be made new in Jesus the Lord. If man does not let himself be made new and does not walk in novelty of life, the Lord will also create new heavens and a new earth, but they will not be for those who wanted to remain old in his flesh and in his sins.

**IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER
(Jn 13.31-33a.34-35)**

Jesus gives his apostles a new commandment. He asks them to love each other. As Jesus loved them, so the apostles must love one another. How did Jesus love his own? Obeying every Word of the Father. Being obedient to the Father until death. How must the apostles and disciples love each other? Obeying them also to every Word of Jesus. Making themselves obedient to Jesus too until death. If you exit obedience to the Word, there is no love. Since every apostle and every disciple, by sacrament, vocation, mission, ministry and gift of the Holy Spirit, each has a truth, a gift and a ministry to fulfil, everyone must love others from the Word, from the truth, from the charisma and from the mission that were delivered to him. The Christian love is not the same for everyone and it is not the same thing for everyone. For all it is obedience to the Word. Modes, forms and ways, are different from person to person, from apostle to apostle and from Christian to Christian. Today this difference is what they want to be abolished. They want a single love.

*by the theologian,
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno*