

Educating by touching the hearts of young people

To understand how the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement has enriched my work as a teacher and educator, we must start from the cross of Christ, the uncomfortable place from which Jesus continues to be our Master, offering himself as a gift of salvation even when this passes through suffering. Because daily bread is joy and pain together and we must welcome both of them: they are joy when you are able to help and give confidence to a boy in difficulty or when you come across his carefree smile, so different from the one of an adult person; and pain when it is necessary to relate to children who do not study, who present problematic behaviors and manage to treat both their classmates and the teacher badly. Indeed, school reflects all the good and bad of society. If society is in a cultural degradation or, worse, if it forgets God and His Word, all of this will have a precise correspondence right in the classroom where both the place of the student and that of the teacher will not be possible to be recognized. So what to do? The first weapon is prayer so that the Lord, who holds the hearts of each one, can give courage and firmness, can make us meek to the point that we can respond to what is wrong with a merciful love: that is, the one that knows how to donate sci-

ence even to those who, apparently, reject it or reciprocate us with ingratitude. Every morning, I pray so that the Lord always gives me dominion over myself and puts sweet but firm words on my lips. I pray not to fall into the snare either of wrath, or the angry cry. I wish I could educate with an always polite word. I keep on thinking of father Bosco: "Remember that education is a matter of the heart, and that God alone is its master, and we might not succeed in anything, if God does not teach us its art, and does not put its keys in our hands". Based on my experience in the various school levels, I understood that it is not possible to teach, for instance, Dante, without going through a relationship, without entering the hearts of young people: then, here is, that the Lord, taught me, through my work, to deny a part of me, perhaps the one I cared about most (library specialist study, literary research, etc.), since the concrete student to be helped takes first place; he needs not some theories, but a simple and clear explanation, perhaps of a conceptual map. In my classes, as a mother and as Saint Paul suggested, I try to 'be of help to everyone', finding the strategies needed to interact both with excellent boys and with boys in difficulty. After all, if young people are not rude, they know how to give a lot in return and even to console. Therefore, I thank the Lord for the good I have received, first reminding myself and then the other educators that teaching those who do not know is a great work of spiritual mercy and, as such, it helps us to find our way to heaven. However, students follow and recognize you as an authoritative guide only if they perceive that you love them with a sincere heart.

My food is to do the will of the one who sent me

The disciples pray to Jesus to take some food: "Rabbi, eat." His response is immediate: "I have something to eat that you don't know." The disciples not only do not know what food Jesus must feed on, but they do not even know what food they must feed on. This is the condition of man on earth if he does not live in full and lasting communion in the Holy Spirit. He nourishes his heart, his soul, his mind, his will and his feelings not only with harmful food, but also with food lethal to his spiritual life. We know that every word of Satan with which man feeds is a word of death. If he does not immediately return to feed on the Word of the Lord, he can incur eternal death. It is perdition and damnation forever. In order for the disciples to also know which food they will have to eat, it is necessary that they listen to the Word of Jesus the Lord and put themselves in communion of wisdom and intelligence with the Holy Spirit.

Since the disciples do not understand and think that someone brought him food, Jesus speaks to them with divine clarity: "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to carry out his work". It is the same response that Jesus gave to Satan in the desert: "Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt 4: 4). Jesus was not sent to earth only to reveal the Word of God to us, but also to show us how the will of the Father is accomplished by humbling and annihilating himself up to death by the cross, letting himself be insulted, beaten,

scourged, crowned with thorns, slapped and spit. And all this is not done to a man, but to the Creator and Lord, to the Light and Truth, to the Grace and Eternal Life, to the Redeemer and Saviour. So much cost the Only Begotten Son of the Lord the fulfillment of the will of his Father. This way his teaching is perfect. He can say: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, who am meek and humble at heart, and you will find rest for your life. In fact, my yoke is sweet and my weight light." (Mt 11,29-30). Jesus is the true Redeemer and Master, because he is the true disciple of the Father in the Holy Spirit.

If the Christian wants to speak to the world, he too must make the Word of Jesus his food. He too must always be obedient, in everything. He too must feed on this heavenly bread which is the will of his Redeemer and Saviour. If the Word does not become his food, his flesh and his blood, he will also proclaim the Gospel, but he will be an empty announcer, who might never attract anyone to Christ Jesus. In fact, he does not show the beauty of the Gospel as Lord Jesus has shown it. Jesus manifested the highest beauty on the cross. That was the beauty of humility, gentleness, forgiveness, prayer, consolation, total annihilation and beauty of the total gift of himself, becoming a holocaust of the atonement for the sin of the world. Mother of the Redemption, arrange that we, disciples of Jesus, also show with our lives the beauty of the Word of the Lord, making it become our flesh and our blood.

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**THE DIGNITY OF THE PERSON, IN ILLNESS
AND SUFFERING SITUATIONS**
Reflections in the light of the Message of S.S. Francis
for the XXVIII World Day of the Sick (11.2.2020)

"Come to me, all you who are tired and oppressed, and I will give you refreshment" (Mt 11,28). With this evangelical call, Pope Francis offers the opening words to his speech on the XXVIII World Day of the Sick. Dealing with an afflicted and suffering humanity, this passage is comforting for those who suffer in body and spirit. "Come to me" is a promise of relief and refreshment; precisely because they are said by Jesus, these are words that come from his heart and are full of hope.

The World Day of the Sick is addressed not only to the sick and oppressed, but also to the poor, to those who are wounded by the weight of the trial and therefore need healing. A message that concerns humanity which, for different reasons, suffers the burden of a history wounded by sin. The eyes of Jesus manage to look deeply into the heart of man, "they stop and welcome the whole man, each man in his health condition, without discarding anyone, inviting everyone to enter his life to gain tenderness experience" (Message).

Among the various serious forms of suffering and diseases, it is necessary to customize the approach to the patient, "adding to treating the taking care, for an integral human healing". The Pope certifies that treatments, medicines, places and people alone are not enough: there is an urgent need for humanity and feelings of true charity, which give the patient awareness, indeed the joy that they are not receiving only something, but the necessary which goes beyond their material need, because as the Pontiff adds, "in illness the person feels compromised not only his own physical in-

tegrity, but also the relational, intellectual, affective and spiritual dimensions; and therefore awaits, in addition to therapies, support, concern and attention... in short, love".

On this point, the message is addressed, in particular, to all health professionals, who must take into account that "any diagnostic, preventive, therapeutic, research, treatment and rehabilitation intervention is aimed at the sick person, where the noun "person", always comes before the adjective "sick"". The person says much more about the state of health. Each person contains within himself a divine plan, a life and a singular history: therefore, the doctor's relationship with the patient must be "constantly held out for the dignity and life of the person".

Christ looks at the world and every sufferer who turns to him. As in the Gospel, before the sick, he gave no recipes, but himself, his charity and his availability. Just like for the body, being a gift from God, we must ensure maximum care, so we must never forget to have as much care and attention for the health of the soul. Here is why Jesus also wanted to indicate a particular place where one is able to find full refreshment: the Church, metaphorically indicated as the "inn" mentioned in the passage of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:34), "the house where you can find his grace which is expressed in familiarity, in welcome and in relief".

May the Virgin Mary, Health of the sick and Mother of the Redemption, support with her intercession all the people who bear the burden of the disease, together with their families, as well as all the health workers.

Father Alessandro Carioti

**The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE**

**SIR, I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE A PROPHET
(III SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR A)**

IS THE LORD IN OUR MIDST OR NOT?
(Ex 17.3-7)

How long does the faith of the people of God in the Lord and in his servant Moses last? The time so that the enthusiasm aroused by the miracle wrought by God through Moses are exhausted. Having enthusiasms being exhausted, they return to non-faith, to murmuring and to lamentation. A small difficulty is enough and faith is immediately non-existent. The loss of the faith or the fall from it, can induce to doubt also the one who must lead the people from faith to faith. In fact, Moses doubts. For his doubt he will not enter the Promised Land. The Lord deprives him of this joy so that he always remembers that the people's faith is from his faith. If he falls, all the people gets lost. If he doubts, everyone will doubt. Testing the Lord, wanting to be sure of his presence, when up to now he has always been at the helm of his people, is a manifestation of bad and worst faith. Despite this sin, he responds with his love.

CHRIST DIED FOR US (Rm 5,1-2.5-8)

How big is the faith of Christ Jesus? It is as great as his obedience and abandonment in the hands of the Father. On the cross it is the utmost of his faith because it is the utmost of abandonment and obedience. The bigger the obedience, the bigger the fruits that our faith produces. Christ Jesus died for our sins, for our reconciliation and for our life and the Lord really, truly, filled us with his love through his Holy Spirit. Christ Jesus did not die for us who were righteous. He gave his life for us who were sinners, wicked and without God. So much is the greatness of his faith. The Father

asked him to die for the wicked and He gave his life on the wood of the cross. What happened in Jesus must happen in every one of his disciples. We too must die for the wicked, however becoming saints in Christ by the work of his Spirit. It is the way of salvation.

GO CALL YOUR HUSBAND AND COME BACK (Jn 4,5-42)

Today we talk a lot about dialogue. However, I believe it is more of a philosophical and scientific dialogue aimed at the search for truth, since today many Christians assert that they do not possess the truth. Instead, the prophetic dialogue and the dialogue of the missionary of Jesus the Lord is different. The prophet and the Apostle of Christ the Lord know the truth. Indeed, in the New Testament, they themselves are truth, since they are members of that body which is the way, the truth and the life. If the Christian says he does not possess the truth, he attests that he is not a true Christian because he does not profess himself a part of the body which is truth and life. Jesus converses with the woman of Samaria. The woman does not understand. Jesus gives a sign of his truth. The woman hears the truth and manifests it to Jesus: "I see that you are a prophet". From this moment on the woman knows that she is facing the truth and is looking for truth. Her search is satisfied because Jesus revealed to her, only to her, that he was the Messiah. Only if the Christian manifests himself as truth in history, he might manifest himself as a person carrying invisible truths.

by the theologian,
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