

HOMILY OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, FR. SILVIO SASSI

(during the Closing Mass, Meeting of the Major Superiors, 20 November 2011)

IN THE SOLEMNITY of Christ King of the Universe, it is possible to dream with open eyes and imagine, for a moment, the heavenly scene of the coming of the glorious Christ, surrounded by the angels and saints of heaven, in the act of entrusting to the Father all creatures and all creation so that God may be “all in all”.

The readings of the Word of God just proclaimed help us, however, to re-open our eyes in order for us to emerge once more into our every day life where we are called to live in a human story that is mysteriously intertwined with the story of God even in the experience of evil and sin, the fruit of human freedom.

In the **second reading** (1Cor 15:20-26, 28), our Father Saint Paul reminds us that with the gift of the resurrection of Christ, for those who are called into existence on earth is given a preview of how will be the end of each one of us and of the entire universe: “For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ all shall be brought to life.”

However, this “resurrection from the dead”, in order to live in God, is a way of existence that can be anticipated in the human dimension of every day life. In the verses that precede the text of the **first reading** (Ez 34: 11-12, 15-17), Yahweh, through the prophet Ezekiel, rebukes the kings of Judah and the leaders of the people who, instead of “pasturing” Israel, think only of “feeding” themselves by exploiting the people. Therefore Yahweh himself is transformed into a “shepherd” for his people in order to “go in search of the lost, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded, cure the sick, take care of the sleek and the strong” and “judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats”.

This image of God as “shepherd” of his people, reminds us at the same time of the description that Christ makes of himself as a “good shepherd” in John’s Gospel (cfr. Jh 10: 11-18); it introduces us to the understanding of the **Gospel** of today (Mt 25: 31-46) which describes the glorious Christ while he proceeds to the final judgment on history. The resurrection of Christ was preceded by the earthly existence of Jesus as “good shepherd”; the resurrection of every woman and man who lives in this life must be preceded by an existence dedicated to the “works of mercy” by helping the poor, the abandoned, the suffering of every kind.

The vision of the glorious Christ who judges all men and women based on love towards the most needy is the synthesis in imagery of the meaning of the liturgical year, of all the research and of the discussions on the truths of faith: all of one’s faith in Christ which is all summed up in works of charity towards our neighbor in need.

The love of neighbor is the only reliable thermometer to measure our love for God: neither knowledge on dogmas, nor the solemnity of the liturgical celebrations, nor the subtle distinctions on ethical behavior would serve to something if they do not result to the love of neighbor. Saint Paul reminds us of the primacy of love in the new life in Christ (cfr. 1Cor 13: 1- 13).

Applying these consoling truths of the faith on our meeting which is ending today its work on the study, reflection and conclusions on the service of authority that we are called to render to the communities of our Congregation, we are strengthened by the certainty that all aspects of the Pauline life must converge so that every Brother and every element of the communities can tend to holiness through evangelization in communication.

As Blessed James Alberione teaches us, we Paulines have a **particular way** of thinking and living the works of mercy: "That the apostolate become the exercise of charity. The apostolate that you exercise is all a work of mercy" (*Requiescite pusillum*, 1933, p. 15); "in the exercise of the apostolate it is possible to say that all the spiritual works of mercy are summed up" (*Vademecum*, n. 1010). Primo Maestro makes a precision: "At the doors of convents in the past, in general, soup was distributed, bread was distributed and is still done in many places, so at the doors of the convents the truth must be distributed. That of which man is in need: to know God, to know his eternal destiny " (*Vademecum*, n. 1045).

In this "Pauline" vision of evangelization with communication, understood as an act of charity that realizes the works of mercy toward those in need, the programmatic phrase of Primo Maestro makes sense for our apostolate: "**do the charity of the truth**". Let us apply on ourselves what the Founder explains with greater detail while talking to the Daughters of Saint Paul: "You do charity, not teaching; you don't do works of charity in hospitals, in the charitable works in general, but your charity is more exquisite: give the truth. This is the greatest charity, because it is charity to the mind, to the soul, to the spirit" (*Alle Figlie di San Paolo*, 1955, p. 430).

If the works of mercy are the thermometer of faith in God, the love for the apostolate in communication lived as charity is the thermometer for the Pauline charism. The communication is our form of charity towards the neighbor which reveals the quality of our experience of God. The communication is our specific form of "witnessing": he who has the nostalgia for other expressions of the works of mercy more identifiable with the traditional means, is to be respected, but for his own good and for the peace of every one, it is good to help him to seek it elsewhere.

In the vision of Primo Maestro the Pauline who realizes the works of mercy with communication has come to discover the "beatitudes" connected to the evangelization with communication and to value all the technologies of communication as a new version of the **canticle of creatures** of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Every time, and rightly so, we underline that the Congregation and the entire Pauline Family was **born from the Eucharist**, we should not forget the mission that derives from this vocation to our existence: "*everything that you have done or have not done to one of these little ones, you have done or have not done to me*". The presence of the glorious Christ in the Eucharist forms the apostle of communication who knows how to discover in the needs of its recipients the mysterious presence of the same Lord. **The Pauline charism is "eucharistic" because it nourishes itself of the bread of life to be able to nourish with this bread those who are hungry of communication.**

Primo Maestro confirms for us that communication is our "means of sanctification": "The saints are depicted in their hands with the instruments, the symbols, the emblems of their sanctity: I, says the apostle of the press, would like to be pictured with the pen and with the inkwell, or standing beside the printing machine fully operational" (*Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, 1921, in *La primavera paolina*, p. 142). Therefore, in the picture of the beatification, behind the Founder was placed as background the antenna of communication. **Sanctity is possible with communication.**