

I'M THE ONE WHO WILL GIVE YOU THE SPIRIT

LECTIO

(what does the Word in itself say)

1 Corinthians 12:4-12

⁴There is diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same. ⁵There is diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. ⁶There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all. ⁷The Spirit reveals his presence in each one with a gift which is also a service. ⁸To one is given to speak with wisdom, through the Spirit. Another teaches according to the same Spirit. ⁹To another is given faith, in which the Spirit acts; to another the gift of healing, and it is the same Spirit. ¹⁰Another works miracles, another is a prophet, another recognizes what comes from the good or evil spirit; another speaks in tongues, and still another interprets what has been said in tongues. ¹¹And all of this is the work of the one and only Spirit, who gives to each one as he so desires. ¹²As the body is one, having many members, and all the members, while being many, form one body, so it is with Christ.

JOSEPH ALLAMANO: AT THE ORIGINS OF A MISSIONARY CHARISM

* “The form which you must take in the Institute is the one which the Lord has inspired me with and with which he inspires me; and I, terrified by my responsibility, absolutely want that the Institute perfect itself and live a perfect life. The good must be done well; otherwise, amongst my many activities, I wouldn’t have taken upon myself yet this very serious one of the Institute’s foundation. The experience of community, which I have lived for my whole life, I want to apply to this Institute. Take heed of my commands, of my exhortations and even to my simple desires, which you know well” (VS 86).

* “You are Consolata Missionaries. But are you Consolata Missionaries in fact or only in name? You will truly show that you’re Consolata Missionaries, if you’ll have the spirit of the Institute and will regulate your lives of every day and of every hour in conformity to it. The spirit is what gives form and life to the single institutions, just like to the single members. Every institution has its own spirit, of which and for which it lives; and the individual as such are live members of the Institute to which they belong, in so far as they have its spirit. You have to have the spirit of the Consolata Missionaries in your thoughts, in your words and in your deeds” (VS 88).

The thought of the Father Founder recalls the words of Scripture where Paul, conscious of his paternity with regards to the communities founded by him, writes: “Because even though you may have ten thousand guardians in the Christian life, you have only one father; and it was I who gave you life in Christ through the Gospel. Therefore I advise you to follow my example” (1 Corinthians 4:14-15). So even his firm admonishment to fidelity to the gift received makes us remember Saint Paul once again: “As I have said and now say again: if anyone preaches the Gospel in a way other than you received it, may he be cursed” (Galatians 1:9).

“REFLECT UPON YOUR ORIGINS” (ISAIAH 51:1)

* Reflecting upon one's origins above all means "remembering", "making memory", that is grasping the love of God, the Institute's real source: in other words, there's a past to be revisited, a physiognomy to clarify, a journey of fidelity to straighten out.

It's therefore important to reflect upon our origin, contemplate our history the Institute's history and one's own personal history but not only by scrutinizing "the positive and easily integral facts of one's own history, but rather by grasping what one has lived out in its universality, given that only a memory which embraces the totality of existence can discover the fidelity of God's love" (A. Cencini).

* Making memory means looking at life like Moses looks surprisingly and fearful at the burning bush, opening himself up to a future of promise.

* Making memory means learning to read all of life as a *Historia Salutis*.

Revisiting the past in order to discover the fidelity of God's love, of his mercy and of his forgiveness. God's love is "re-creator" and its much stronger than the love itself that He created. The memory remembers the good received and reconstructs the past placing a new beginning. Finding one's own image once again: the charism is the story of God's love for me and for the whole world.

Living the future in hope, nourishing the memory: the Word of God gives wisdom every day (cf. Timothy 3:15-17), and the Spirit will lead to the truth (cf. John 16:13-15).

THE LOVE OF GOD BECOMES HISTORY IN THE FOUNDER

* Gift and charism don't exist as abstract concepts, generic words, but always and only incarnated in the personal history of a man or of a woman. A gift supposes a giver and whoever welcomes it. "There are different gifts", that is charisms (v. 4); "the Spirit manifests itself in a different way in each one of us" (v. 7).

A charism identifies itself in a person, "a concrete, familiar, loved figure which has been "configured" to Christ in his steps and plastical made an "image of Christ" by the Holy Spirit with a particular mark, with a new evangelical synthesis of virtues, of life, of works in which the original creativity of the Holy Spirit shines forth" (J. Castellano).

* For the Consolata Missionaries the charism is called Joseph Allamano: "God the Father who wants all men to be saved in Jesus Christ, has chosen his servant Joseph Allamano in order to found our religious missionary family for the evangelization of peoples" (Cost 1).

* This charism is the call to relive the Founder's experience.

"The Church in fact isn't a museum where the masterpieces of the Spirit are admired; it's the communion of the saints where the founders, who are alive in heaven, want to make themselves present in their children, in order to bring the Gospel of Christ to fullness, with an industriousness equal to the challenges and to the needs of the contemporary world" (J. Castellano).

* The charism is a gift and a challenge at the same time.

It's the Spirit's response to the signs of the times. The Holy Spirit, "the hidden director of history" (Saint Ireneus), is constantly at work and "stimulates the Church into developing itself" (AG 4).

The multiplication of always new gifts can be read as an unfolding of Christ throughout the centuries, “fragments of the only Gospel”, almost a lively Gospel revived in always new forms. For this reason the saints are a “word of God” said to the world, interventions of the Spirit turned to guiding history: the Spirit in fact knows the longing and the groans inherent in every generation and answers it by giving rise to new vital energies (cf. Corinthians 2:11).

* The charism is a lively word of the only Word, a grace of the only Spirit. Its “always for the common good” (v. 7) and builds unity.

The incarnate words of the only Word, manage to say all of the Gospel only in chorus, in unison. The total Christ attracts like a magnet all of his fragments towards unity. The Spirit of unity calls everybody to reciprocal communion so that Christ be proclaimed, communicated and that the world believe.

The “conscience” of foundation in Joseph Allamano had been a novelty in the Church back then, brought forward in unity and in obedience to his bishop and to the Pope.

IDENTIFYING ONESELF IN THE FOUNDER

* Living the charism defines the people and the communities.

“God’s call to live in the Church in a determined religious family marks each one of us with a particular grace, that of opening oneself up almost instinctively to communion with one’s own Founder, with his religious experiences, the evangelical words that he lived out, the doctrine that he proposed, the works that he did. Everything however with the novelty of today and the personal characteristic of everybody.

Identifying oneself with the founder shouldn’t be reduced to a mere juridical formality or to some typical outer form.

If Jesus himself had been the model for the founder, the real identification precisely lays in the following of Christ, in the identification with him, living out the words of the Gospel with which we are modelled internally, privileging amongst all the words the ones which makes us more closer to the founder’s experience: missionary spirit.

At times one isn’t able to identify oneself with one’s own founder because the transforming strength is missing to identify oneself first with Christ in the concreteness and in the radicalism of the Gospel lived out. In order to be the founder fully one first of all needs to be Jesus, live out the Gospel, put God in the first place, be radical in charity. From this divine stamp comes the religious with the founder’s spirit. Actually the founder is understood better in his experiences carried out right from the beginning of his evangelical commitment” (J. Castellano).

MEDITATIO

(what the Word tells me)

* Celebrating a hundred years of the foundation’s charism is a particular invitation to rediscover, interpret and live out today the spirit of Blessed Joseph Allamano (cf. PC 2).

This is his invitation when he would exhort to reflect: “Are the thoughts which you nurture in your mind throughout the day worthy of Missionaries? Are they constantly turned to considering the aim for which you have come to the Institute? Are you that is desirous to become saints, in order to

make yourselves right from now suitable for the salvation of souls by means of your holy intentions? Are you always ready to distance from your mind and from your heart every thought that isn't good, every aim which isn't upright, every affection which is even just a bit human? Is your mind full of God, of Je-sus and of his things? Do you really feel it in everything like Our Lord feels it? Can you really repeat like St. Paul of having "Jesus Christ's thought" (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16)?" (VS 88).

"Not shadows or masks of Missionaries, but perfect Consolata Missionaries. All together, and each one individually, put a lot of good will into acquiring the Institute's spirit, in such a way as to form a community, if not perfect, at least with a good will to perfection. Let whoever has backtracked a bit, get back on his feet; let whoever has been started off well, try not to stop, but to progress in a good spirit. I say: guide yourselves according to the spirit, so that in God's Service you may correspond to the aim of your vocation: "Be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord" (Romans 12:11)" (Vs 90).

* The charism develops itself first of all departing from the radicalism of the vocation to live Christ, before living the Founder's charism. God is firstly chosen, not a determined religious family. The commitment is to live out the whole Gospel and not only a part or an aspect which characterizes the charism itself.

Only in this hierarchy of values and of choices are we authentic children of Allamano: we become so capable of working on the wavelength of his ideal in the Church's today, and the identity in our religious family and the love for it withstand all the difficulties and all of the crises. Do I live out the Gospel with radicalism?

* The charism lived out by every Founder teaches: The listening to and the welcoming of the Word of God: it's making oneself "sky of the Word" right to becoming "living word".

The docility to the Father's will, who calls to holiness: "Like clay in the potter's hands".

Love which makes itself obedience and choice: "You are, Lord, my only good". Is this my way of living?

* Is Paul's experience my own: "It's no longer I who live, its Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)? Is Joseph Allamano's experience who lived according to the urgency of contemplation and of mission my own?

"The Father founder welcomed and deepened his charism with an intense spiritual life and an ardent apostolic zeal. Faithful to the Spirit's action, he matured the Institute's form by means of prayer, study, listening to the signs of the times and the approval of the Church" (Cost 2).

* What is my personal relationship with Father Allamano, my father, my model, my encouragement?

ORATIO

(what does the Word make me say)

Reparation:

“If the Institute’s spirit were to be neglected, I hope that I’ll make myself heard from Paradise!” (J. Allamano). “Mind you don’t forget the things that your eyes have seen, that they not escape from your heart [...] you will teach them to your children” (cf. Deuteronomy 4:9).

Thanksgiving:

How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and I will sing my little-big Magnificat (cf. Psalm 115).

Spirit’s request:

“All of these gifts come from the only and same Spirit. He distributes them to everybody, as he wishes” (v. 11).

Come, Light of the hearts!

CONTEMPLATIO

(“The Lord speaks and everything is made, commands and everything exists” [Psalm 32:9])

* “There are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is only one. There are various ways to serve, but the Lord is only one. There are many types of activities, but who moves everybody into action is always the same God” (v. 4-6).

* “In everybody, the Spirit manifests itself in a different way, but always for the common good” (v. 7).

* “Seeking only God” is for Joseph Allamano the secret of the Institute’s life and of missionary fecundity.

COMMUNICATIO

(the first and only receiver of the Word is the people of God)

Lectio Memoriae (how to celebrate the centenary) at Joseph Allamano’s school:

* memory of the charism: “I am teaching you the norms and the laws that you may put them into practice in the land you are going to enter and have as your own. If you observe and practice them, other peoples will regard you as wise and intelligent” (Deuteronomy 4:5-6).

* Remembering knelt down, “at the feet of the Eucharistic Jesus” (Vs 267), asking for pardon, thanking, remaining docile to the dispensing Spirit of the charism.

* A feast to be lived “between God and us”. “It’s a feast which reminds us of the great love that God has for us. “Dilexi te”, exactly you and no other. It comes to enliven our faith and our charity, its like a spur to holiness, to renew the Spirit in us” (Vs 268).

* “Soli Deo honor et gloria” (VS 272).