

L'Osservatore Romano – 18 May 2013

Pope Francis' meeting with Ecclesial Movements

As Beggars of Faith

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The Pope has called together all the movements and new communities for a great gesture of prayer on May 18th to ask the Spirit of Christ for the gift of His presence, which fills the void of our boundless need. We are a movement and want to be part of this Church gathered by Pope Francis.

What does this call mean for each of us? It is a very beautiful and precious opportunity to say again that the Pope is important for us, because he is the point in history that Christ has given us, against whom evil and confusion will not prevail. For this reason we go to him as beggars, to be supported and confirmed in the faith.

For the pilgrimage not to be a formal or simply 'pious' or 'devout' gesture, we must understand its existential implications. Seeing how confusion dominates everywhere around us, we ask ourselves why it does not reign in us. The reason has nothing to do with our being better or more intelligent or more coherent than others; this is not why we are not confused, but because we find ourselves continually before an irreducible Fact that constantly frees us from the general disorientation.

We go to the Pope in the Year of Faith, and precisely this circumstance shows us the discriminating factor of the Catholic faith: the existence of an objective point in history, not produced by our imagination, a real point that saves us from the bazaar of interpretations, and thus from confusion. As Fr. Giussani often said, without this point in history there is no Catholic experience: "Christianity is the announcement of a Fact, a Fact that is good for man, a good news: Christ born, dead, risen. It is not an abstract definition, a notion subject to interpretation. The Word of God—the Word—is a fact that occurred in the womb of a woman, became a child, and grew to become a man who spoke in the public squares, who ate and drank at table with others, who was condemned to death and killed. The face of that single man today is the unity of believers, who are the sign of Him in the world, or as Saint Paul says, who are His Body, His mysterious Body—also called 'the people of God'—guided and guaranteed by a living person, the Bishop of Rome." (Luigi Giussani, *Religious Awareness in Modern Man*).

For each of us, going to Rome is the opportunity to rediscover the importance of this irreducible Fact and our bond with Pope Francis. We can live this gesture in a formal way, and thus aridity and the desert will begin to prevail in us, or we can live it engaged in reality beginning with this

irreducible presence, and thus interest, curiosity, and surprise will start to win; only this makes the difference.

Since the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has invited us to recognize the profound reason why we were chosen with Baptism and why we encountered a charism, inviting us to: “to open the doors of our heart, of our life, of our parishes [...] of the movements, of the associations; and “to come out” in order to meet others, to make ourselves close, to bring them the light and joy of our faith, (...) knowing that God takes our hands, our feet, our heart, and guides them and makes all our actions fruitful.” (General Audience, March 27).

The need of the human heart today is so immense that only an equally boundless answer will do: “Christian truth is attractive and persuasive because it responds to the profound need of human life, proclaiming convincingly that Christ is the one Saviour of the whole man and of all men. This proclamation remains as valid today as it was at the origin of Christianity” (Audience with the Cardinals, March 15, 2013).

The Pope constantly urges us to live faith as witness: “One cannot proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one’s life.” But he warns us that this is possible only “if we recognize Jesus Christ, because it is He who has called us, He who has invited us to travel his path, He who has chosen us. Proclamation and witness are only possible if we are close to Him, just as Peter, John and the other disciples” (Homily, Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls, April 14, 2013).

I am amazed how not a day passes that Pope Francis does not encourage us to live like Jesus: “Being Christian is not just obeying orders but means being in Christ, thinking like Him, acting like Him, loving like Him; it means letting Him take possession of our life and change it, transform it and free it from the darkness of evil and sin” (General Audience, April 10, 2013).

We go to Rome to beg for the Spirit of Christ, so that we may admit with simplicity of heart: “Everything for me You were and are” (Ada Negri); not only “were” like a relic of the past, but “are,” here and now, as a Presence who sweeps us into a vortex of life.

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