



***Cavanis Lay Fraternity***  
***Sacred Heart House, CAVANIS INSTITUTE***  
***Via Col Draga - Possagno (TV)***

Beloved,

While I write these lines, I have before my eyes the gospel of the second Sunday in Ordinary Time. The text is composed of a series of short but very effective suggestions. The first, the one that inaugurates the text, has its center in the figure of John the Baptist who, staring at Jesus, exclaims: *"Here is the lamb of God"*. And the evangelist notes that *"his two disciples, hearing him speak in this way, followed Jesus"*.

There is in those few words such strength as to induce those who hear them to become disciple; in those words, the power of prophecy is revealed. Only shortly before, in verse 29, more extensively John, always speaking of Jesus, had said: *"Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sin of the world!"*. The lamb of which John the Baptist speaks is the scapegoat (which could be taken both by those born of sheep and those born of goat) of which it is narrated in chapter 16 of the book of Leviticus; it is the lamb on which the high priest, laying his hands, confesses the sins of the people almost unloading them, as a burden, on the animal that would then be led out of the camp and abandoned in the desert to signify the will of the people to eradicate sin.

Now Jesus, in the testimony of John the Baptist, is the event that realizes the ancient figure: he is the true lamb, the one who alone has the power to take away the sin of the world. This is what moves the steps of John's two disciples. The second suggestion is also formidable: Jesus sees that he is being followed and asks the two what they are looking for. They want to know so they answer - where He lives. The story becomes essential but extraordinarily incisive: He said to them: *"Come and see"*.

So they went and saw where he was staying, and that day they stayed with him. The predicates speak of actions that have in themselves a decisive character and a clear relationship of consequentiality: the coming and seeing of the disciples is a response to Christ's invitation to come and see, just as staying with him is a consequence of 'have seen'. The third scene indicates a further step. One of the two, Andrew, meeting his brother feels the need to bear witness to what happened: *"We have found the Messiah"* - he says - and leads Peter to Jesus.

A decisive transition is made: the expectation of the ancient fathers, guarded by faith of Israel in the First Testament, finds fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. He is the awaited, the Messiah; for this, it makes sense to follow him and to abide with him; for this reason it makes sense to bear

witness to him and also to lead the brothers to him. Recognizing in Jesus the one who gives meaning to our expectations, following him, remaining united with him and bearing witness to him, is the sequence in which our life of faith is also summarized and expressed.

We should also recompose this style at the heart of our fraternity: following Jesus, seeing where he dwells (among the young people of our schools, missions, our works ...), staying with him and bearing witness to him.

May the Lord help and encourage us!

## ***From the gospel according to Saint John (John 1, 29-42)***

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus.

## **Cavanis School and Identity... Remembering January 2, 1804**

*(in [www.cavanis.org](http://www.cavanis.org), Fr. Diego Dogliani, CSCJ, 02 January 2021)*

I asked myself some questions about the Founders of our Congregation. I asked: what will people have thought in seeing them passing through the streets and squares of Venice dressed as priest? Certainly, as noble and prominent people, they would have been occasion for particular attention. It was in fact impossible not to know them. They were so close in age that they almost looked like twins and lived in that Cavanis family so esteemed for Christian values and charity towards the poor; every day they had attended the Dominican school and knew the dance steps, as well as knew how to play the violin, like all the boys of the Venetian nobility.

It was known how much, as Secretaries of the La Serenissima (Most Serene Republic of Venice - Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia), they were appreciated for their seriousness and professionalism. Now, unexpectedly, having abandoned that promising and envied career, here they are simple priests who go to take interest in street youth and take care of poor families and the sick in the parish.

And this commitment seems to have become their everyday life. That famous May 2, 1802 explains everything, when they presented themselves in Saint Agnes, their parish - father Anthony a

young priest and Count Mark, still a layman - with those first nine young boys whose education they took to heart.

As always someone appreciates enthusiastically, some others, unconvinced, would whisper softly: “Easter eggs”, that is: “it is only youthful enthusiasm”. Count Mark, ready, with his usual wit reply: “If they are eggs, soon they will become chicks”; and ... he will truly be a prophet! From that humble Chapel of the Crucifix, next to the church, the two brothers will rent a small room in the Parish of Saint Trovaso where, on January 2, 1804, with the protection of the blessed Virgin and entrusting themselves to the divine Providence, they start the first School of Charity.

Two years later they bought the Da Mosto palace, and up till now it is still seat of our Schools in Venice. The School started by the Venerable brothers Anthony and Mark Cavanis repeats and continues till today their educational style for the formation of the heart, mind and relationships of many young people, initiating them to the values of the Gospel and to human and social responsibilities. The educational passion of the two brothers will also make them think of the continuity of this mission, and, inspired by God, the Congregation of the Schools of Charity will later be born. For more than two centuries now, with the same spirit and the same passion for the education of young people, hundreds of congregated priests and lay collaborators have been involved.

The Congregation, which began in Italy with the School, is present with its various educational works in other parts of the world. The way of educating of the two brothers has become the new style of educational apostolate of each Cavanis work, in school, youth association, parish or shelter and of spirituality, becoming a distinctive identity of educators. Each Cavanis member or collaborator, as stated by the founders Anthony and Mark, will have to interpret the educational fact as a father and a mother in the family.

The Founders themselves fix with an image this educational identity that distinguishes us from the rest: “Ours are more fathers than teachers”. Every true father and every true mother in the family takes care of each child with love, paying special attention to the most fragile and accompanying them in life.

Happy anniversary, Cavanis Schools of Charity!

*Fr. Diego Dogliani - Rome*

