



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

INVISIBLE MONASTERY 02 April 2021

Beloved,

I have in my hand this text as this Lent draws to a close, thinking that when we celebrate our date of fraternal communion and prayer, we will be, with the whole Church of God, immersed in the very heart of Holy Week, intent on commemorating the death of our Lord. The Lenten journey, still today, is often interpreted in a moral key as an itinerary of liberation from sin, through the exercise of an interior discipline based on mortification and renunciation. The risk of this approach is to consider salvation as a goal deserved with our effort, earned through our moral commitment, almost the reward due to our inner effort.

This way of seeing, however, nullifies the sacrifice of Christ: if my merits or works of justice save me, the cross of Christ is no longer necessary. On this the Apostle Paul is categorical: *“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”* (Tit 3: 4-5). What doesn't work is our comprehension of the mystery of sin that, in the New Testament, before an action for which we are responsible, is a condition of which we are victims.

Above all, the apostle John helps us to understand this when he distinguishes between "sin" and "sins"; in the Greek text the two situations are specified, not only through the use of the singular or plural (as in the Italian translation), but by the use of two different terms. Sin, in the singular, is identified by the term *“amartia”* which indicates not so much something that is done, but rather something that is not available (*amartano* in Greek, means “not to have”, “to lack ...”); sins, in the plural, are instead identified by the term *“adikia”* (infringement of justice) or *“avomia”* (infringement of the law) and these are the fruit of our radical weakness. But what excludes us from the fullness of life is sin, and "the sin of the world (*hamartia*) is this" - Jesus always says according to the testimony of John - *“because they do not believe in me”* (John 16: 9). The key is therefore to believe (etymologically "to give the heart"), that is to enter in that dimension of familiarity with God that Jesus came to realize through "the new and living way" of the Incarnation. There are many ways to enter this space of intimacy with God and must be recognized in the concrete reality of our life and our history. I like to think with all of you about this path, so beautiful and unique, which is opened to us by the experience of our FLC, which is certainly a way of service and of mission, but also of conversion and friendship with God (cf. 2, paragraph 3 of our Statute).

Let's listen, after the passage from John's Gospel, to a beautiful testimony, which dates back to 19 years ago and which shows how much our journey of fraternity is in harmony with the journey of the Congregation itself.

From the holy gospel according to Saint John (John 12, 23-26)

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

From the report of the pre-capitulary commission to the IV Provincial Chapter

Fr. Giuseppe Leonardi, Capezzano Pianore, May 7, 2002

Our Province (today, Delegation) is sterile, almost childless, but we must think and act to make it fruitful again. (...). Let lay people be made to understand that this hope of ours is not motivated by reasons of interest, but by the very nature of our vocation and by the missionary needs of the Church. It is necessary to tell them clearly that they are not called into question to save a dying charism, and that we Cavanis, even in the actual situation in which we find ourselves and for which we are responsible, are not resigned for this. We want to re-found ourselves, but we are not willing to sell off the charism. So after having confronted ourselves with the charism of our founders to live it more fully, we propose it to the lay collaborators, we do not do it because it is something ours to keep, or re-launch, or rent, but because it is a gift made by the Holy Spirit to the Church, for the Church and to be shared in the Church.

(...)

The acts of the XXXII General Chapter say: "The Church in the third millennium will undoubtedly be the Church of the laity. The numerous lay people who live the Cavanis spirituality and mission actively participate in the implementation of the charism. Like us, they believe in the fruitfulness of the charism and with us they risk and carry in their body and in their daily life the wounds of the Lord: vigilance, solicitude, patience, hope of fruit and prayer. The Church, a community of ministries, discovers today that everyone has gifts and charisma and that sharing between lay people and religious is richness. Openness to the lay is a need of the Church as people of God: the Congregation, in fact, does not possess the charism exclusively, but lives it with creative fidelity together with all the people of God. The lay are called to look directly to Frs. Anthony and Mark Cavanis and to draw inspiration from them to resolve the crucial situations of our time and of today's society; not so much to model oneself on the actual religious (...) and much less it is to deal with the taking over in force from the Cavanis religious of Italy in disarmament. Naturally they are called to be inspired by the charism, in spirituality and in works, in collaboration with the religious and encouraged and helped by them. (...). It is a journey to be made together, difficult but necessary, which remains the only viable path.

Fr. Giuseppe Leonardi

Father of goodness, reunited to celebrate Easter, we want to ask your blessing for our family and for our homes. Turn your eye of mercy towards us. Grant us to live in peace and love. Remove all danger from us, mainly the lack of love. Make our home your home. Give us the Holy Spirit, so that we may grow by offering our gifts at the service of all. We ask you for strength in difficulties, happiness in successes and joy every day. Amen.