



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

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As it is inevitable, I prepare this contribution in advance in regard to the date of our appointment; and today, as I am to reflect, I find myself lingering on the beautiful page of the Evangelist Mark that the liturgy offers us on the XXIX Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Among the resistances that the disciple encounters in his journey of following the Lord, one in particular emerges strongly in the central chapters of Mark's account: it is the resistance to the logic of diakonia, the logic that deeply animates the way of Jesus characterized by his obedience to the Father and from his love for men.

Twice Jesus has to return to the theme of service to educate the disciples who are reluctant to this perspective (cf. Mk 9, 33.35 and 10.42-45). And this intervention of Jesus on service, which aims to correct the temptation in which the disciples easily get involved, it occurs significantly after the second and third announcement of the passion, death and resurrection (cf. Mk 9: 30-32 and 10, 32-34); the disciple struggles to accept this harsh word; struggles to go beyond the paradox that nevertheless opens one's gaze to the mystery of the Son of man, to the mystery of the One who "did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (10, 45).

But the disciple's heart is elsewhere; he cannot accept this word, closed in his incomprehension and his fear. This is why Mark, beforehand, had noticed: "Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid" (10:32).

Precisely in this context of 'distance' between Jesus and the disciples, who are still walking with him, it's situated the surprising question of the sons of Zebedee. They want (it is the claim of power) that Jesus favors their thirst for career: "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (10:37).

Therefore, with an easiness that irritates the other ten disciples, James and John ask to have the first places. In their request, it emerges once again the refusal to follow the cross, which marks the passage through which Jesus realizes the gift of his life. And it is precisely on this passage that Jesus insists in his response to the disciples: "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized ..." (10:39).

Taking part in the glory of this humiliated Messiah is possible only by sharing the experience of Easter like him, remaining as he did in solidarity with mankind in obedience to the Father who has chosen this path to reveal his mercy.

And with force, the two images of the cup that must be drunk (image that returns to Gethsemane: cf. Mk 14:36) and of the waters in which it is necessary to immerse himself, express both the path of humiliation and death that Jesus is walking, both the full sharing of the human reality that the Son of God assumes.

This is the tension that animates the way of Jesus and this is what matters to the disciple. The word of Jesus - this seems to me an useful message for our FLC – it cannot be reduced to a vague exhortation to humility; it is, in fact, a criterion of discernment for style of every Christian community that among disciples there can be no room for the logic of power, but only openness to the spirit of service.

From the holy Gospel according to Saint Mark (Mk 10, 42-45)

Jesus called them and said to them: “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

“Charity does not divide the world between those who give without receiving and those who receive without giving”

(Fr. Diego Spadotto, in www.cavanis.org 18.10.2021)

For the Founders, formation was not an armor that prevented them from grasping the needs of society, especially of young people. They formed the first confreres by combining life experience with children and sapiential study. Since the fall of the Republic of Venice and in the wars of the Italian Unification, they have faced changes in government, instilling in their confreres and young people attention to the poorest and social commitment to be **"good citizens"**.

They taught confreres and young people to consider indispensable the economic and psychological independence from those who considered the poor as **"plebs"**, in whom it was not worth investing. **Charity does not divide the world between those who give without receiving and those who receive without giving.**

Enunciating programs to be carried out in the formation, as it is done today, it's useless if they are not carried out. We must shake off the sloth that covers the path

of formation like an opaque blanket of indifference and harnesses with deaf habits to the urgent need for change. One does not **"enter"** into religious life but he is **"welcomed"** and **"God himself will bring to completion what he started in us"** (Phil 1, 6).

Then he becomes aware that he cannot rely on himself, but only on the love of God, because it is not a structure that guarantees success in itself. It is a journey in the desert with everything that involves difficulties.

For this, it is necessary that the offering of one's life takes place solely in response to his love that has called us. The offering of one's life **"as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God"** (Rom 12: 1), is possible only because God calls and gives strength. It is not to pursue a personal project, and it is not a human decision but a consent to God, a prophetic gesture. **The offering is made of a gift that we have received: our life.**

