



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

INVISIBLE MONASTERY 02nd April 2022

While thinking about our next spiritual encounter, within the invisible walls of the monastery that we helped to build with the humble but precious contribution of our faith and perseverance, I pause to reflect on the text of the first reading of the Third Sunday of Lent, which offers to our meditation the terrible and fascinating event of the burning bush. I have always liked to associate this text with the vocation of the venerable servants of God, Fr. Anthony and Fr. Mark Cavanis: God, after having heard the lament of his people in Egypt, came down to free them asking Moses to be his voice and his hand in favor of the Israelites, he also heard the lament of the youth of Venice, at the end of the 18th century, and intervened to help them asking the Cavanis brothers to be his voice and the instrument of his Charity for the benefit of "so many poor children". Re-read the 3rd chapter of the Exodus becomes an opportunity to also rethink our Cavanis vocation; we too can be a sign of God's tenderness and a providential instrument of grace for our young people, in continuity with the mission and in harmony with the charism of the Cavanis brothers. We live the Lenten journey in this tension, at the same time making it the way to re-motivate our belonging and our spiritual and charismatic identity.

From the book of Exodus (3, 1-8 and 13-15)

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.

Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey. But Moses said to God: “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you’, and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses: “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you’.” God also said to Moses: “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’. This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

On the synodal journey remembering the 250th anniversary of the birth of Fr. Anthony Cavanis (from Cavanis website: www.cavanis.org, Fr. Diego Spadotto, 28th February 2022)

Synod, is also a time to “*remember*” and to “*listen*” to our Saints. *The life of the Cavanis religious can regain vitality if they set out again in the spirit of Venerable Fr. Anthony*, if their hearts beat in unison with that of Christ and if they listen to the Spirit that speaks through children and young people and those who dedicate themselves to their formation. The Congregation has always suffered from a “*lack of workers*” and an “*abundance of the harvest*”, but this does not prevent us from moving forward into the future with modesty and sincere feelings of belonging and fraternity.

“It's not the studies that you do but the people you meet along life's journey that help to form and solidify your spirituality.”

It is enough to allow ourselves to be guided by the holiness of our Saints to face the concrete problems of the lack of means and of other manifold limitations. *The time of the Synod is precious and should not be wasted in empty words or with superficial attitudes, it should be sanctified with personal and convinced participation.* It is God's grace, it is not an event, it is a spirituality of joy and fragility, of trust and hope, of welcoming gratuitousness of the “*poor children*”.

The opinionated gossip that trivializes the synodal journey dies when it meets the ears of an intelligent person, who lives with gratitude the greatest of all virtues, the Charity. When we try to probe the profound reasons of crisis in consecrated life, we inevitably bump into *the growing difficulty that we religious have to be credible in the eyes of the people of our time and of young people in particular.* For some, the crisis is irreversible, they are those who have a destructive, almost diabolical relationship with the Congregation, and they feel a kind of morbid enjoyment when they say: “*religious life is over*”.

For others it is a phase of *purification and growth*, and those who, following in the footsteps of Jesus, radically accept uncertainty about the future and they are certain that the Lord is completing what he himself has begun. *The faith of an individual does not exist without the relationship with the faith of others who believe and hope.* Living by this faith means living by the love of God which is manifested in the patient apprenticeship of brotherly love. *The future of the Congregation*

also depends on the ability of our religious communities to exercise the mission of Jesus among young people in such a way that the Gospel can touch their hearts.

The joy of doing everything that possible to reach gratuitously the young people, it gives to our religious communities the strength to live the “*condition of minority*”, knowing that only God the Father is the master of youthful hearts. *The Congregation does not live for itself and the preoccupation for its survival cannot be part of its priorities.* Did we get it? *Being at the service of the "poor children" in the manner of the servant Jesus, is part of his ultimate reason of being.*

The means, even the most modern ones, and the way in which they are used, can never prevail over the *purpose* of the Congregation, otherwise every renewal runs out very quickly, for not having drawn on the “*source*” of Cavanis spirituality. The questions concerning the Congregation and its structure *must be posed starting from the fruitfulness of the Gospel that it transmits*, and not based on the lack of religious to “*carry on*” the works.

