

FAITH AND REASON

“Together in love, we Christians can change the world, we can change ourselves, because God is Love”, Pope Francis said in a video message to participants in an ecumenical spiritual retreat promoted by the John 17 Movement, on Wednesday 9 June. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s video message, which he addressed in Spanish.

Dear Friends of the John 17 Movement, I know that you are gathered in New York at Saint Joseph’s Seminary, whose Rector is Bishop James Massa, with the participation of Cardinal Joseph Tobin. I greet you cordially and thank you for your commitment to John 17. It is a special retreat on “Relational Reconciliation, a New Way to Christian Reconciliation”.

At the Pentecost vigil, organized by the Charis Commission for Christian Unity, at the moment broadcast to the whole world from Jerusalem, I recalled just how moved I was by the expression in the Acts of the Apostles with which those who met the first Christian community described it: “See how they love each other”.

The John 17 Movement is about those who, around the table, drinking a cappuccino, dining or eating an ice cream, discover they are brothers, not on account of their color, nor their nationality, nor their place of origin, nor the different forms in which they live out their faith, but as children of the one same Father. And even if there is no table, even if there is no cappuccino, even if there is no ice cream, even if there is no coffee, because there is poverty and war, we are still brothers, and we must say this to each other. Without thinking of our place of origin, or of our nationality, or of the color of our skin: we are children of the same Father.

Love has no need for profound theological knowledge, which is however necessary. Love is an encounter of life, first with the Lord Jesus, with the person of Jesus, and from there on, from that encounter of love, arise friendship, brotherhood and the certainty of being children of the same Father. Life that is shared and dedicated to a higher purpose: love can change the world! Everything starts from there, from a fraternal encounter, love can change the world, but first it changes us.

Together in love, we Christians can change the world, we can change ourselves, because God is Love! I know that we had a date to meet in recent months and the pandemic did not permit this. We will meet later, hopefully soon, before the end of the year. I urge you to continue to walk together, sharing life and brotherly love. The John 17 Movement and the testimony you have shared with me each time we have met gives me hope and gives me joy. As Joe Tosini says, love is the most important thing in the world, yet no one teaches how to love! Whether you love or not, the love that became flesh, the love that gave its life for us, that is the way. Very often we confuse love with a kind of platonic, idealistic philosophy. Love is concrete, love gives its life for others, as Jesus gave it for us. Perhaps because love is not taught, it is lived, and you are teaching us by living it.

May God bless you! See you soon! And please do not forget to pray for me, because this work is not easy at all... **Pope Francis**

My Hope: Though in a foreign land I dwell afar, I taste in dreams the endless joys of heaven. Fain would I fly beyond the farthest star, And see the wonders to the ransomed given! No more the sense of exile weighs on me, when once I dream of that immortal day. To my true fatherland, dear God! I see, For the first time I soon shall fly away. Ah! give me, Jesus! wings as white as snow, That unto Thee I soon may take my flight. I long to be where flowers unfading blow; I long to see Thee, O my heart's Delight! I long to fly to Mary's mother arms, to rest upon that spotless throne of bliss; And, sheltered there from troubles and alarms, For the first time to feel her gentle kiss. Thy first sweet smile of welcoming delight Soon show, O Jesus! to Thy lowly bride; O'ercome with rapture at that wondrous sight, Within Thy Sacred Heart, ah! let me hide. O happy moment! and O heavenly grace! When I shall hear Thee, Jesus, speak to me; And the full vision of Thy glorious Face for the first time my longing eyes shall see. Thou knowest well, my only martyrdom is love, O Heart of Jesus Christ! for Thee; And if my soul craves for its heavenly home, 'Tis but to love Thee more, eternally. Above, when Thy sweet Face unveiled I view, Measure nor bounds shall to my love be given; Forever my delight shall seem as new as the first time my spirit entered heaven...**St. Therese of Lisieux**

The Blessed Mother’s Grace: There are many of us who would not come to Our Lord, unless we had someone who knows our needs better than we know ourselves, and who will ask Our Lord for us. The role of Mary makes her acceptable to everyone. Those who at the marriage table did not need to know she was the Mother of the Son of God in order to receive the benefit of her Di vi ne Son But one thing is certain - no one will ever call on her without being heard, nor without being fully led to her Divine Son, Jesus Christ, for whose sake she al one exists - for whose sake she al one was made pure - and for whose sake she was given to us..... **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

Redemption is Even Greater than Creation: Both reason and natural justice move me to give up myself wholly to loving the one to whom all that I have and am. But faith shows me that I should love him far more than I love myself, as I come to realize that he has given me not only my own life, but himself as well. Why shouldn't the creature love his Creator, who gave him the power to love? Why shouldn't he love him with all his being, since it is by his gift alone that he can do anything that is good? It was God's creative grace that out of nothingness he raised us to the dignity of humanity. And this fact alone demonstrates our duty to love him, and the justice of his claim to that love. I owe all that I am to him who made me. But how can I pay my debt to him who redeemed me, and in such a marvelous way? Creation was not so vast a work as redemption. It is written of the human race and of all things that were made: "He spoke the word and they were created. But... to redeem the creation that sprang into being at his word, how much more he spoke, what wonders he worked, what hardships he endured ..What humiliations he suffered! In that light "what shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me". In the first creation God gave me myself, but in this new creation he gave me himself, and by this gift restored to me the self that I had lost. Created first and then restored, I owe him myself twice over in return for myself. But what do I have to offer him for the gift of himself? Even if I could multiply myself a thousand times and then give him all what would that be in comparison to God..... **Bernard of Clairvaux**

A Thought For the Day

- Sunday** The source of justice is not vengeance but charity.
Monday Listen and attend with the ear of your heart.
Tuesday Faith means battles; if there are no contests, it is because there are none who desire to contend.
Wednesday The dress of the body should not discredit the good of the soul.
Thursday Who except God can give you peace? Has the world ever been able to satisfy the heart?
Friday God gives each one of us sufficient grace ever to know His holy will, and to do it fully.
Saturday Our body has this defect that, the more it is provided care and comforts, the more needs and desires it finds.

God's Ideal Woman: God has two pictures of us: one of what we are, and the other of what we ought to be. He has...the model and he has the reality: the blueprint and the edifice, the score of music and the way we play it. God has to have these two pictures because in each and every one of us there is some disproportion and want of conformity between the original plan and the way we worked it out. The image is often blurred, the print faded. Like unhatched eggs some of us refuse to be warmed by the divine love which is so necessary for the incubation to a higher level. We fall short of what God wants us to be, There is actually only one person in all humanity of whom God has one picture, and in whom there is perfect conformity between what he wanted her to be and what she is and that is Mary, the Mother of the Lord. But Mary is the equal sign, the ideal that God has of her, what she is and in the flesh. he models and the copy are perfect; she is all that was foreseen, planned and dreamed. The melody of her life is played, just as it was written..... **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

Two Commitments to Make to God every Morning: First an act of acceptance of all the afflictions you may have to bear during the day. Second is an act of renunciation of all the temptations of the devil and all the feelings of self-love and other passions that may come upon you during the day. These two acts have considerable importance because many annoyances may occur during the day, they pass on and you may not think of making an offering them to God. Many temptations and impulses of self-love creep into our actions without your taking notice of them. By virtue of the first act, however, God will be glorified by all the pains of soul and body that will make themselves during the day, if you accept them first thing in the morning out of love for him. Then by virtue of the second act, God will give you strength to resist more easily all evil temptations and to destroy more easily all the effects of self-love and other vices **St John Eudes**

Marriages do not endure because people fall in love with an ecstasy or a thrill, loving the cake as long as it has frosting on it.....
Bishop Fulton Sheen

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