



VATICAN - THE WORDS OF DOCTRINE by Rev Nicola Bux and Rev Salvatore Vitiello - The Olympic Fire and the Fire of Jesus Christ

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - The human longing for brotherhood has taken another hard blow: not even the Olympic Torch is above protest. Yet, if it is to be a symbol of something which can be achieved, at least there where the Olympic Games are held, and not a utopia, it should not be contradicted; but that fire has been extinguished many times.

The Masonic plan to revive the flame of the gods of Olympus in order to attain the unification of humanity and install universal peace - a poorly disguised imitation of catholic Christianity -, reveals its inconsistency. Like all those statements about values which never indicate the roots from which those values come.

The ancient Greeks saw fire as a symbol of the deity, a power jealously guarded in the heavens, while man was left on earth in the cold. Prometheus tries to steal it but is chained to a rock where his regenerating liver is eaten daily by a vulture; a metaphor of the ever present human longing to have God on earth.

So the Olympic Games in the ancient times were an emulation of man's "recurrent struggle" to steal something from the gods. Jacob struggled with Gabriel "strength of God": and he won at the price of a dislocation, which he never forgot (cfr Gen 32,33), the limit of the demand to see God.

But Jesus came and He showed us God, announcing in Perea, where many Greeks lived: "I have come to bring fire on earth; and how I wish it were blazing already!" (Lk 12,49); but He the new Prometheus, subjected himself to the humility of the Cross.

For a Christian the Olympic Fire is a presentment of something, the impatience of the new world, which grows only with patience, the patience of God, who endures the cross and renounces all triumphalism.

Instead those who invented the modern Olympic Games thought perhaps: "we now do things, we have found our way, and on this path we will find the new world" (Benedict XVI, addressing the clergy of the dioceses of Belluno-Feltre-Treviso, 24 July 2007). This temptation must be resisted by the Church of Christ which must remain humble and therefore great and filled with great joy.

Humanity of heart grows with humility not with spectacular deeds, which instead produce passion and pride. This is the true hope of the world.

Sport is not our deity. The Church, as a communion of brothers and sisters, is reborn and grows day by day: this is a real contribution to the development of society and the world. Only if we draw, with a humble and confident heart, from the fire of God's love, can we kindle the fire of charity among all men and women on earth:

contemplative prayer "Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love"(CCC 2717).

The Easter Vigil Liturgy blesses the new fire, symbol of the glory of the Father who sent His Son on earth: to kindle desire for heaven and to lead us renewed in the Spirit to heaven. This cosmic element is therefore seen by faith as the symbol of God's greatness and closeness and the power of his Holy Spirit.

The ideal of the Olympic Games to create a world of unity and "catholicity" reveals itself once again to be utopian, in the face of mankind's longing for freedom, in the face of anyone who senses that freedom can never be suppressed, since it is an essential trait of the image and likeness of God, who is Freedom.

The Church, always countered by the great powers of the Anti-Church, as Christ by the Anti-Christ, knows that only through the permanent scars of the Risen Lord blows the Spirit, in humility and in silence, renewing her in all her fragility and the world in all its contradiction.

In this lies true joy: to "race in the stadium" to win the prize, not fleeting, of eternal life and to implore: "Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love". (Agenzia Fides 17/4/2008; righe 47, parole 680)