agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

VATICAN - THE WORDS OF DOCTRINE by Rev Nicola Bux and Rev Salvatore Vitiello - Christian hope is a certainty

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Advent, the season which celebrates our waiting for the Lord's return at the end of time, and revives the memory of his first advent in the flesh, comes every year especially to declare “the true shape of Christian hope ” as the Pope says in the Encyclical Spe salvi. To understand this we must first of all ask, “ what may we hope? And what may we not hope?”.
We must free ourselves of the pretentious idea that once acquired the answer can be accumulated by the next generation: as it can happen in the material or in the moral field “for the simple reason that man's freedom is always new and he must always make his decisions anew. These decisions can never simply be made for us in advance by others—if that were the case, we would no longer be free. Freedom presupposes that in fundamental decisions, every person and every generation is a new beginning. Naturally, new generations can build on the knowledge and experience of those who went before, and they can draw upon the moral treasury of the whole of humanity. But they can also reject it, because it can never be self-evident in the same way as material inventions” (n. 24).

The human condition is such that the truth which has convinced us and to which we freely assent, is for others simply “present as an appeal to freedom and a possibility for it ”. It is not change in the structures and the personnel inside them, however important this may be, which guarantees morality, since it is always a question of the use we make of our freedom. Now “ Freedom requires conviction; conviction does not exist on its own, but must always be gained anew by the community […]Since man always remains free and since his freedom is always fragile, the kingdom of good will never be definitively established in this world. Anyone who promises the better world that is guaranteed to last for ever is making a false promise; he is overlooking human freedom. Freedom must constantly be won over for the cause of good”.
How important this is for this singular community, the Church! Those who dream of a better Church – someone once wrote of a “dream of the eighth Church ”, disappointed perhaps by the seven historical Churches of Revelation – perhaps unwittingly, end up as victims of the heretical ides of Gioacchino da Fiore and the Hegel-Marx ideology. This is why the Fathers spoke of the Ecclesia semper reformanda, not in the sense of change in external structures, because “ Man can never be redeemed simply from outside.” (n. 25), but in a sense of awareness of the intervention by the Other, awareness of the daily coming of the Saviour of personal existence. Therefore the Advent Liturgy says not only that He will come again and that He came, but that He comes. He, His face, is the true shape of hope. Contemplating Him, the idea of external change receives meaning and at the same time, is relativised. The Advent Liturgy prays: “Show us your face Lord, and we will be saved”. Real change demands simply God's redeeming love, which alone is absolute. “ The human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say: “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38- 39).
If this absolute love exists, with its absolute certainty, then—only then—is man “redeemed”, whatever should happen to him in his particular circumstances. This is what it means to say: Jesus Christ has “redeemed” us. Through him we have become certain of God, a God who is not a remote “first cause” of the world, because his only-begotten Son has become man and of him everyone can say: “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). ” (n. 26). (Agenzia Fides 4/12/2008)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it