



VATICAN - TOWARDS THE PRIESTHOOD Mgr Massimo Camisasca - "A True Man"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Anyone reading texts published by the Holy See since Vatican II concerning the formation of priests or young men called to the priesthood cannot fail to be struck by the ample space given to human formation. This points to a profound urgency which deserves to be taken into consideration. The urgency that young men preparing for the priesthood should take this path not because they are afraid of other paths, not as an act of renunciation, but because they recognise the authentic possibility of the full growth and realisation of their humanity. It is impossible to tackle the theme of human formation and that of Christian formation separately. Instead in recent years following a correct focus on the fact that the priest must be a complete man, too much emphasis has been given to the search for the perfect, rather than the true man. Ratio fundamentalis dated 1970 said of the priestly vocation, «although a supernatural gift totally undeserved, it is necessarily based on natural talents so that when any one of these is missing, one may rightly doubt the existence of a vocation». And in Educational guidelines for the formation to priestly celibacy 1974 it is even said «unless there is a man, there is no calling ».

Observations which are correct but they should not drive us to seek in the candidate the perfect man, but rather a man on the authentic path, a man who seriously places the whole of his humanity, his talents and his shadows, before Christ. A man who has censured nothing of his humanity but who is ready for self-sacrifice, because he knows he has received an even greater treasure.

We should not hesitate to welcome to our seminaries and formation houses lively, rich, even problematic personalities as long as the intention is clear as the documents of the Magisterium often affirm. To quote Optatam totius, «the right intention and free will».

The very experience of the house of formation and the seminary should be an experience which does not censure the life of the person but, by means of just sacrifice, fulfils every authentic aspiration. The house of formation or the seminary must be first of all a house of experience of the faith, experience of the people of God as place in which promises and prophecies are fulfilled. Mgr Massimo Camisasca, Superior general della Fraternità Sacerdotale dei Missionari di san Carlo Borromeo. (Agenzia Fides 23/6/2006; righe 31; parole 422)