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VATICAN - WORDS OF DOCTRINE Rev. Nicola Bux and Rev. Salvatore Vitiello - "Church membership and Charity"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - "Church membership and Charity". A priest, a missionary, indeed a Christian is authentic only if he or she operates as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. What must a Christian do? Put into practice the incipit of the Gospel of Mark: "Convert and believe in the Gospel". A priest who does not convert, that is if he does not foster with his word and witness the working of the Spirit which converts the human heart to the Lord, needs to seriously question his vocation. To devote oneself to all manner of social conditions with no desire to lead people to God, is to limit one's activity to that of a social worker, a worker for the state naturally concerned with social justice rather then charity.
Whereas Christians, called to share the needs of humanity "must not be inspired by ideologies aimed at improving the world, - says Pope Benedict XVI in the encyclical Deus Caritas est - but should rather be guided by the faith which works through love (cf. Gal 5:6). Consequently, more than anything, they must be persons moved by Christ's love, persons whose hearts Christ has conquered with his love, awakening within them a love of neighbour. The criterion inspiring their activity should be Saint Paul's statement in the Second Letter to the Corinthians: "the love of Christ urges us on" (5:14)» (Deus Caritas est, n. 33).
Truly it is membership of the Church that must emerge in the promotion of activity to "save" young people from drugs, prostitution and every form of marginalisation. We must save the errant while not forgetting to stigmatise the error, the sin, so as not to be an accomplice of the evil, as the prophet states. In this work of saving, priests above all should remember they are ministers, useless servants, avoiding all forms of TV of political protagonism; they should prefer to "diminish that He may grow", that the body of Charity, the Church, may grow. They will refuse to be directed by those who say: Christ yes, the Church no; they will seek no other "liberation", than that which comes from communion with Christ.
The error at Babel was that the people did not listen first to the Mystery. This is the tragedy, because on it depends slavery or salvation: to be salvation for others we must depend on the Other. Here lies the difference between Babel and the Tower of Herrmas: the Church is totally relative to Christ who "is also" in relation to the Father.
Von Balthasar divided the mystery of reality in two parts: things of God which can be understood and embraced (Romans 1,19) and those which remain unknown, which we have no means of knowing and consequently do not concern us. Therefore he remarked with astonishing relevance also for our day: "The movement of modern thought is therefore twofold: first draw God to man so that which He bears may be assimilated; then push God away so that his unknown realities no longer concern humanity. Both movements can happen in a Christian and in an atheist key. Bringing man to God means taking the incarnation seriously; pushing God away, we show authentic respect which does not mistake God for the idols of reason. This in the Christian sense. In the atheist sense: God must be brought close until he coincides with mankind and then pushed away so he may dissolve in smoke" (Cordula, pages. 78-79).
Unfortunately in the direction indicated by the latter - part of a formula for an 'anthropological turning point' - collaborators were also a certain type of theology and catechesis, so subtle and cunning in method and language that they shook one fundamental fact for the faith: Jesus Christ is a living person who can be encountered today.
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