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VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Luciano Alimandi - "Holy Mary, gives us your spontaneity of heart"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Spontaneity is one of the great values of life, it vivifies the human heart keeping it open to the truth. This is clearly seen in children: who better than they to teach us to be spontaneous, a gift which flowers in the humus of honesty!

Masters of spirit agree that spontaneity is the true essence of prayer because it makes it authentic: free of hypocrisy and half-truths - or half-lies - it introduces us to God to "adore Him in spirit and truth" (Jn 4, 23). Dialogue between individuals follows the same path; without spontaneity there can be no real sharing of innermost thoughts. Without spontaneity in prayer there can be no "dialogue heart to heart", no "prayer heart to heart" with God; like a day without sunshine it would be dull.

With her illuminating example the Blessed Virgin Mary shows that spontaneity is a constant of her Immaculate Heart, think of when "she hastened to visit Elisabeth", after the Annunciation (cfr. Lk 1, 39). On the wings of Charity and Truth, personified by Christ her Son, Our Lady reaches Elisabeth and in that encounter, pure spontaneity, the most precious gift, the Holy Spirit, is shared. Elisabeth and John the Baptist rejoice and Mary proclaims her Magnificat from the spontaneity of her heart overflowing with God's Love.

Only to humble souls the Lord gives the most perfect and consoling gifts of his Spirit: love, joy, peace... only to hearts which become like children, the Father entrusts the Kingdom of Heaven. Great enemy of spontaneity is human "advantages-disadvantages", calculating with mean-mindedness rather than wisdom of heart.

To savour the gifts of the Spirit, we must also put aside all interested calculating; to make us friends of spontaneity, the Lord and his Mother come to free us of the prejudices which imprison and suffocate our heart. Only then will we be truly free and therefore more human. The Gospel is a call to this conversion of heart. It encourages all to sing the canticle of spontaneity, typical of the simple and the humble! How many confessions of faith, exalted by the Lord, are born of the simple heart: open to the truth! The Gospel, in contents and style, reveals and gives the joy of the Good News spontaneously dilating the heart on the wings of charity and truth.

Saint Luke the evangelist, whose feast we celebrate today, is a witness to all these realities; Jesus' childhood opens our heart to panoramas of extraordinary simplicity, such as the Visitation precisely. From the beginning that Fathers testified that the principal Author of the sacred texts of the Gospels is the Holy Spirit, who relied on the help of humble servants, far from human calculating.

This is why it is against the nature and contents of the Gospel to read it with certain prejudices, calculations, pre-packed schemes, as if those who wrote it were moved not by the Spirit but by hypothetic calculations to render it more interesting! Jesus said the Spirit is like the wind: you hear it but you do not know where it comes from or where it is directed (cfr. Jn 3, 8); the same is true of those who become disciples of the Spirit imitating Jesus and Mary: they leave everything - although not always all at once but gradually - to follow the Lord, becoming ever more spontaneous, more open, with a heart free that God may take wherever he wishes.

Let us ask insistently for the grace of spontaneity, today considerably threatened by a forcefully propagated culture of advantage which despises those who instead choose to be poor in spirit, the least of the least, like Jesus and Mary: "He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly" (Lk 1, 52). (Agenzia Fides 18/10/2006; righe 44, parole 676)

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