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VATICAN - TOWARDS THE PRIESTHOOD- "The priest: love for the truth" by Mgr Massimo Camisasca

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - A priest, more than other people, must be able to give reasons for his faith, documenting his own experience how life changes when one becomes a disciple of Christ. The task of proclaiming Christ as the then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in the book "The Church: a pilgrim community", calls for a witness not a telegrapher. What in fact is the priest's mission, if not to refer the words of Another personally, in a personal way, to the point that they become his own? Here is how Ratzinger explains this journey: «Priestly formation consists in a process through which, gradually one encounters, understands, penetrates and lives within this Word».

Study, the path of formation which leads to becoming a priest, has nothing to do with accumulation of knowledge. Not by chance the Latin word "studium" implicates, before the idea of knowledge, the idea of work, the application of the whole person so that which one encounters in study can expand into his whole being. As John the Apostle says, the purpose of study is « to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (Jn 17, 3). Study in the life of a young man called to the priesthood starts not from a void but from the Event of the Faith which happened when he became a Christian. In the formation of a young priest faith must gradually become a point of departure and a point of arrival also of his intellectual formation so their knowledge blooms in unity of faith, unitary vision of life which faith entails.

To understand this aspect we return to the text of Cardinal Ratzinger: «Today, in an epoch of growing specialisation, I consider the internal unity of theology and its concentric construction starting from the essential are an urgent priority. Certainly a theologian must posses a vast culture, but theology must be able to free itself of weights and concentrate on the essential. It must be able to distinguish between specific and fundamental knowledge: it must offer an organic vision of the whole in which the essential is integrated. Unless it learns to judge from the whole, it will be disarmed, prey to changeable modes».

The priest must be a communicator of the truth which he must possess not as analytic baggage but as something which has profoundly renewed his life. He is a witness of the truth he lives. In fact communication of the truth in the Church is always communication of grace from person to person, heart to heart. (Agenzia Fides 24/11/2006 - righe 29, parole 432)

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