

Consecrated Life - 1 - A response to love, the vine and the branches

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.'" He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." **Jesus, looking at him, loved him** and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. (Mark 10:17-22)

Jesus, looking up on him, loved him (Redemptionis Donum)

" 'And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him.' This is the love of the Redeemer: a love that flows from all the human and divine depths of the Redemption. This love reflects the eternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (8) The Son, invested with that love, accepted the mission from the Father in the Holy Spirit and became the Redeemer of the world. The Father's love was revealed in the Son as redeeming love. It is precisely this love that constitutes the true price of the Redemption of man and the world. Christ's Apostles speak of the price of the Redemption with **profound emotion**: "You were ransomed...not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot," (9) writes St. Peter And St. Paul states: "You were bought with a price." (10)

"The call to the way of the evangelical counsels springs from the interior encounter with the love of Christ, which is a redeeming love. Christ calls precisely through this love of His. In the structure of a vocation, the encounter with this love becomes something specifically personal. When Christ "looked upon you and loved you," calling each one of you, dear religious, that redeeming love of His was directed towards a particular person, and at the same time it took on a **spousal character: it became a love of choice. This love embraces the whole person, soul and body, whether man or woman, in that person's unique and unrepeatable personal "I."** The One who, given eternally to the Father, "gives" Himself in the mystery of the Redemption, has now called man in order that he in his turn should give himself entirely to the work of the Redemption through membership in a community of brothers or sisters, recognized and approved by the Church. Surely it is precisely to this call that St. Paul's words

can be applied: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...? You are not your own; you were bought with a price."(11)

"Yes, Christ's love has reached each one of you, dear brothers and sisters, with that same "price" of the Redemption. **As a consequence of this, you have realized that you are not your own, but belong to Christ. This new awareness was the fruit of Christ's "loving look" in the secret of your heart. You replied to that look by choosing Him who first chose each one of you, calling you with the measurelessness of His redeeming love.** Since He calls "by name," His call always appeals to human freedom. Christ says: "If you wish..." **And the response to this call is, therefore, a free choice.** You have chosen Jesus of Nazareth, the Redeemer of the world, by choosing the way that He has shown you."

RENEW THAT FIRST LOVE

"I invite you in the first place to nourish a faith that can illuminate your vocation. For this I urge you to treasure, as on an inner pilgrimage, the memory of the "first love" with which the Lord Jesus Christ warmed your hearts, not out of nostalgia but in order to feed that flame. And for this it is necessary to be with him, in the silence of adoration; and thereby reawaken the wish to share — and the joy of sharing — in his life, his decisions, the obedience of faith, the blessedness of the poor and the radical nature of love. Starting ever anew from this encounter of love, you leave everything to be with him and like him, to put yourselves at the service of God and your brothers and sisters (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, n. 1)." (BXVI HOM 2014-02-02 17th World Day of Consecrated Life)

Our first and only love

"Once again, we have to ask ourselves: Is Jesus really our first and only love, as we promised he would be when we professed our vows? Only if he is, will we be empowered to love, in truth and mercy, every person who crosses our path. For we will have learned from Jesus the meaning and practice of love. We will be able to love because we have his own heart." (FRAN LTR for year of consecrated life)

Our tendency to think we have done this for ourselves (Deut 8:7-20)

"For the LORD, your God, is bringing you into a good country, a land with streams of water, with springs and fountains welling up in the hills and valleys, land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, of olive trees and of honey, land where you will always have bread and where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones contain iron and in whose hills you can mine copper. But when you have eaten and are satisfied, you must bless the LORD, your God, for

the good land he has given you. Be careful not to forget the LORD, your God, by failing to keep his commandments and ordinances and statutes which I enjoin on you today: lest, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, and your herds and flocks have increased, your silver and gold has increased, and all your property has increased, you then become haughty of heart and forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that house of slavery; he guided you through the vast and terrible wilderness with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; he brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the wilderness with manna, a food unknown to your ancestors, that he might afflict you and test you, but also make you prosperous in the end. Otherwise, you might say in your heart, "It is my own power and the strength of my own hand that has got me this wealth." Remember then the LORD, your God, for he is the one who gives you the power to get wealth, by fulfilling, as he has now done, the covenant he swore to your ancestors. But if you do forget the LORD, your God, and go after other gods, serving and bowing down to them, I bear witness to you this day that you will perish utterly. Like the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so shall you too perish for not listening to the voice of the LORD, your God."

Time to take care of your own vineyard (Song 1:6)

Do not stare at me because I am so black, because the sun has burned me. The sons of my mother were angry with me; they charged me with the care of the vineyards: my own vineyard I did not take care of.

IMAGE OF a PLANT

Isaiah 5 - tender care for a vineyard

- Now let me sing of my friend,
- my beloved's song about his vineyard.
- My friend had a vineyard
- on a fertile hillside; [made good soil, good field]
- He spaded it, cleared it of stones, [prepared for it]
- and planted the choicest vines; [love of predilection, choice]
- Within it he built a watchtower, [so He could watch it, look upon it, love it]
- and hewed out a wine press. [so He could bring wine of joy from fruits]

- Then he waited for the crop of grapes, [patiently loved and waited]

growth of plant, united/watered in love, planted in particular soil, supported by lattice

See what He has done for you - uprooted the nations! (Psalm 80)

- You brought a vine out of Egypt; to plant it He uprooted the nations
- Before it you cleared the ground; it took root and spread throughout the land

Tragedy strikes (Psalm 80)

- then why have you broken down its walls
- it is plucked by all who pass by
- it is ravaged by the boar of the forest
- struck down by the beast of the fields

Healing through His Love (Psalm 80)

- O LORD God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.

He waters it, protects it (Isaiah 27:2-5)

On that day—The pleasant vineyard, sing about it! I, the LORD, am its keeper, **I water it every moment**; Lest anyone harm it, **night and day I guard it**. I am not angry. But if I were to find briars and thorns, In battle I would march against it; I would burn it all. But if it holds fast to my refuge, it shall have peace with me; it shall have peace with me.

A word from Pentecost

Prophecy - more of it

Step out of the cave into the waterfall and we can see as God sees. It is a waterfall of the Spirit, or prophecy, of mercy. Go out, but not too far. Stand in the waterfall... Then go out all into the river and carry water out into the forest and give whatever we have...

Isaiah 43:19 - see I am doing something new...in the wasteland rivers

Outline

- 1 joy (and peace) - fruits/flowers - Beauty!

The Lattice

- 2 hiddenness, weakness? - minority
- 3 penance/repentance (always turning more fully to the Lord) - pruning
- 4 (charismatic gifts) Holy Spirit
- 5 mercy
- 6 crucified love (Sorrowful Mother)