

Prelate's Homily in Saint Pantaleon, Cologne (19 August 2017)

My dear brothers and sisters:

In the first reading,¹ we heard Saint Paul exhorting us: *The love of Christ urges us on*. It is the urgency of living not for ourselves, but for the One who died and rose for us, for Christ. The Apostle himself sums up what was taking place in Jesus' passage through our world: *In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself*. Nevertheless, so much still needs to be reconciled to God in this world of ours! Saint Paul adds that God *has committed to us the word of reconciliation*.

Christ's love urges us on to live for Him and not for ourselves: this entails for all of us the Church's apostolic, evangelizing mission, the mission to bring to all sectors of society the "word of reconciliation." To do so we need to deepen our knowledge, especially by getting to know the Gospels better. As Saint Josemaria Escriva tells each of us: "There is an urgent need to spread the light of Christ's doctrine. Store up your training, fill yourself with clear ideas, with the fullness of the Christian message, so that afterwards you can pass it on to others."²

Perhaps there arises in our heart the question that Judas Thaddeus addressed to Jesus: *Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?*³ Wouldn't it be better, Lord, for you to do everything instead of entrusting it to our poor efforts. Jesus' reply, to Thaddeus and to us, is clear: *If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him*. Truly, it is our Lord who does everything, but He does it and will always do it through his Church, through each one of us, to the extent that He is in us through love.

All of us, each in our own environment, in our family, our work, our social relations, can and should make present the word of reconciliation, make present the Gospel, make present Christ. What a marvelous mission, despite our own weakness! As Benedict XVI said at the solemn inauguration of his Pontificate: "There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know Him and to speak to others of our friendship with Him."⁴

The Gospel passage we just heard has directed our thoughts to the Cenacle at Jerusalem, to our Lord's Last Supper.⁵ In his long priestly prayer, Jesus at one point asks God the Father not

¹ 2 Cor 5:14-20

² Saint Josemaria, *The Forge*, no. 841.

³ Jn 14:22

⁴ Benedict XVI, *Homily*, 24 April 2005.

⁵ Jn 17:20-26.

only for the Apostles, for those present there, but also for us, for all who down through the centuries will be his disciples. And what does Christ ask for us? For unity: *that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*. For the unity that is necessary for effective evangelization, so that the world may recognize Christ; as our Lord says, *so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*.

This unity that Jesus asks for us has its paradigm and foundation in the divine unity between the Father and the Son, in the Holy Spirit, infinite personal Love. So let us strive to be instruments of unity in the Church, by being instruments of unity in our own family, in our own setting, in our ordinary life, through love, through a charity shown in affection and deeds.

That they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe. These words turn our thoughts to Pope Francis who, as Roman Pontiff, is the visible source and foundation of unity in the Church.⁶ May each of our days contain frequent prayer for the Pope, for his intentions, for his work as shepherd of the universal Church.

As Saint Josemaria prayed: all united to the Pope, let us go to Jesus through Mary. *Omnes cum Petro ad Iesum per Mariam!*

⁶ Cf. Vatican II, Const. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 18.