

For the closing of the Year of faith, we wish to prepare ourselves to the feast of our Founder with a novena. We propose short reflections on faith of Blessed Alberione, to be lived with an apostolic spirit.

Faith is the root of every sanctification and apostolate

We believe, but surely our faith is not yet perfect. We have to think that not always the Lord gives us the graces we ask him for our present life. But he always grant us the spiritual graces that we ask him: either those or others that he sees more needed for our soul. He grants us material graces only if they are beneficial for our soul.

Faith helps us to see life in the proper way; helps us believe in Paradise and offers us the means: prayer: a good life, correspondence to our vocation, the fulfilment of our mission.

Faith helps us think in the optic of eternity; helps us to treasure everything for eternal life; helps us understand what are priesthood, dignity and duties: what is religious life, the reason for which it has been instituted and by whom it was instituted.

Faith! It feels our days with joy, especially when we face difficulties, temptations and disappointments.

Faith! It makes us know how poor are the words of worldly people and how instead is precious the wisdom of the Gospel.

It is necessary that we place ourselves in front of the eternal truths. To live of faith means to be always aware of these great truths and to direct our life to its end. (Pr Ip. 167)

1. – Faith leads us to be witnesses of communion...

In order to realise what we can and have to reach: “religious life paradise on earth”, two conditions are needed:

Faith: that always may show to us Jesus Christ in our neighbour. In difficult moments always to recall what Jesus has said in the Gospel, and that he foretold for the day of universal judgment: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me... Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ 41.” (Mt 25, 34-40).

Abnegation: It is indispensable for the community life that is social life; the diversity of temperaments, of age, of habits, of ideas, of experience, of occupations and of tendencies, etc., is always causing of reciprocal sufferings. That’s why it is necessary to be tolerant, to renounce to our point of view, to acknowledge once own mistakes, be courteous, etc.: all of this requires universal abnegation. (cf UPS IV 221)

2. – Because of faith man lives on high...

Because of true faith man is elevated to an immensely high level: to work supernaturally on this level, bring forth fruits supernaturally, to reach a supernatural reward. As a shoot of good olive engrafted into a wild olive produces new fruits, in the same way engrafted in Christ he can produce fruits and works that are of man, but that Jesus Christ makes his own. But the flower of faith can blossom only if it is exposed to the rays of the divine sun that is under the warmth of the Holy Spirit.

To work by faith, to gain treasures for heaven: “The just man will live by faith” (Eb 10:38). Religious life is a life of a more vivid faith; if faith becomes pail, religious life will be abandoned; perhaps we may still have the Christian; and may be not even this... because “what was the best, once corrupted becomes worse”.

In order to obtain justification, the human being has to cooperate with God using his faculties. The principal faculties are those of the soul, and among them the mind; the act of faith belongs to it. Every cognition starts from the senses, so in the same way every action starts from the mind. (cf SP, September 1954, p. 4)

3. – Faith is the root of every sanctification and apostolate and of steadiness

Vocation is born from a living faith and is sustained and active if it is more and more enlightened, felt, and lived. The apostolate is irradiation of Christ and of the truth, of moral and cult taught by Him: therefore faith is strengthened.

The fruit of the apostolate depends on God: so that the souls may welcome and adhere, because science is the road to faith, and so that the apostle may work with merit: “Without me you can do nothing” (John 15: 5). The book model, divine, source of what we say is the Gospel. Therefore every house should have two centres (that complete each other and then become one): the Tabernacle and the Gospel: above Jesus Eucharist and below the Gospel. For this purpose the solemn benediction will be done and will be exposed in the places of the apostolate. We work under the blessing gaze of Mary our good Mother. (SP, January 1954, p. 24)

4. – Faith lights up the flame of zeal

The first foundation of the apostle is faith. The second is to feel with the Church. The third: love for God and for the souls.

We can summarise this in one word: we are apostles in the measure that we are Catholics. The only means to exercise the apostolate is prayer, as for the Trappists. And it can be the preaching, as for the sacred orator. But the apostolic soul is a soul deeply catholic. Faith enlightens the flame of zeal; the heart activates all the energies.

“O Lord, increase our faith”. A weak faith, religious ignorance, the errors on the doctrine of the Church, will never produce an apostolic heart. An ardent faith, enlightened, upright, creates Apostles. Paul at first had persecuted the Church, but when Jesus enlightened him, he believed: from that moment he felt a strong desire to elevate her to queen of the world. And behold he travels from country to country, speaks and writes, exhorts and challenges, suffers and gives his life. “For the Church of which I was made a servant with the responsibility towards you that God gave to me, that of completing God’s message, the message which was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and has now been revealed to his holy people “(Col 1: 25). (cf RdA, 103;107)

5. – Faith makes the apostle...

Is it not this the aim of history: that the Church of Christ may resurrect progress and prosper? Prophet and evangelist, shepherd of souls or teacher, fathers of family or soldier, simple Christians or cloisters... all workers in charge of the construction of the great edifice “with the aim to build up the Body of Christ”.

Paul is right: may powerful and tenacious strength work: “If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow completely into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole Body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each individual part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up in love” (Ef 4,15).

I exhort to study the catechism, to go to listen to the sermons, to read good books and magazines, to grow in the patrimony of the religious knowledge. May the heart be kept pure, to run away from persons, things, discourses and readings contrary to the Church. Above all to pray, since faith is infused by the Holy Spirit in our hearts... The richness of an exuberant faith tends to expand itself in “richness of glory”. We speak, propose, and defend what fill up our soul: “The mouth speaks

from the fullness of the heart”. Why God and his kingdom are not searched for? “There is not a wise person; there is nobody who may search for God.”

Paul after having received the ineffable gift of faith in baptism, “immediately he was preaching Jesus Son of God in the synagogues”. Notice: immediately. And nothing stopped him on the roads of the world. Faith makes the apostle. (RdA, 108)

6. – When there is faith, everything converges towards the Gospel...

On Monday the intentions of Primo Maestro are especially for the apostolate: the formation of the apostles, the exercise of the apostolate, and the docility of those to whom we approach, the souls, that is, those who will be reached by our publications.

Above all: for the formation of the apostles, and it is good that before the apostolate many masses be celebrated and to pray and act with faith. The one that has little faith has also little zeal; the one that has little faith does not persuade anybody; the one instead who has faith, has the ideal of God: God wants that everybody to be saved” (1 Tm 2, 4); the ideal of Jesus: “Has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted” (Lc 4,18).

The one that has the ideal of “giving God to the world and the world to God” succeeds to be efficacious in the apostolate, walks on the footsteps of St. Paul, who “believed” and became the Apostle of the Gentiles. He believed in the strength of the Gospel, believed that truth, holiness, peace and salvation come only from Jesus Christ. St. Paul believed, and it is here that we too have to arrive: to have much faith. When we have faith, we direct everything to the Gospel, to the apostolate, as St. Paul did, that is: mind, heart, will, activity, health.

To feel the duty of the apostolate. The one who feels also foreseen; the one, who feels, occupies his time intensely. To desire to enlighten all the peoples... And today it is the radio that can enlighten the people; it is the press; it is the cinema. To feel the beauty of this mission. «Omnia facio propter evangelium». (cf RSp p. 12-13)

7. – From faith springs up the fruits of the apostolate...

By the intercession of St. Joseph let us ask this morning an increase of faith, of hope and of charity. Faith: that is to believe that the Lord has assigned to us a mission, with the helps and the graces needed. Faith that is shown in a practical life, doing as everything would depend from us, and trusting in God, as everything would depend on Him!

Faith that we express in “the pact” o “secret of success”, which is part of our prayers.

These expressions are very certain: faith is the root of every sanctification; the spirit of faith is the beginning of sanctity. From faith: hope, charity, religious virtues. From faith: the fruits of the apostolate.

The one who believe will see God because he will be saved; he knows that it is necessary to run to the Tabernacle to have the necessary strength for the apostolate. Believe and you will verify what was announced. When faith is missing, the root is missing and when the root is missing in a tree it dies. The Lord grants us what we ask according to the decree of our faith; and if one has little faith he is like the one, who having little cloth can do only a small dress for the doll or a baby.

We have to lean on the grace of our vocation and task. When God gives a vocation, a mission to a soul, He also gives all the graces, the necessary help to fulfil that mission.

He never fails us. We can fail with our inconstancy and a weak faith, but God no: He never fails. (cf RSp, p. 28)

8. – Faith is placed in God not in us, behold our “pact”...

Faith in God, not in us. To make a “pact” with God. Behold how the “pact” starts, the pact that was done at the presence of two witnesses: Mary Queen of the Apostles and St. Paul (as two witnesses are needed when things of great importance are done): “We must correspond to your holy will and

arrive to the degree of perfection and heavenly glory which you have destined for us and apply ourself zealously to the apostolate of social communication in a holy manner. But we see ourselves very weak, etc.” That is we confess sincerely our weakness. Too many times we attribute to us instead to God what we do; too many times we ask for gratitude while this goes only to God.

We do a true “pact” with God; we say what we want to give: “To seek in all things only and always your glory and the good of the souls” (and the first soul is ours). Then we say what we expect from Him: “We trust that you will grant us good spirit, grace, knowledge and the means for doing good”: here is what we expect from God.

And our piety has not to be a sterile piety, done only as a duty weighing on us: it has to be a piety that will make us truly feel the need of God; that will truly make us reach to a great degree of holiness. (RSp, p. 28-29)

The reading of the Bible revives and increases our faith...

The one who reads often and with upright intention the Sacred Scriptures acquires a very vivid faith in Jesus Christ, and by living what He did for the redemption of the human race, with steady and tranquil faith will pray in order to have from Him all the necessary means to attain salvation.

But the Bible does not present us only Jesus Christ, as the central object of our faith, but narrates examples of persons who had a great and admirable faith, reviving and increasing in this way our faith.

(...) Try yourselves. Before the reading, you feel to be human persons, that is human thoughts will fill your mind, desires and low affections in your hearts: but after the reading, you get up no more as human persons but as gods: your thoughts will be divine, divine will be your aspirations, saint and supernatural your desires. It is appropriate on this regard the saying of St. Augustine: «If you love the earth, you are terrain; if you love the heavenly things, you are heavenly».

By reading the Bible we too look for Jesus and only Jesus, as Mary and Joseph were looking for him in Jerusalem, and once found Him, He will certainly revive our faith, and people can say of us what Saint Elisabeth said of Mary: “Blessed are you who believed” (Lc 1,45); if our faith will be alive, also in us, as in Mary, the wonders of the Lord will be done. (cf LS, 119-120)