

Christmas of fire

I have something very important to tell you. I would like to repeat to you something that we are reminded of on Christmas more than on any other day of the year.

The goal, the aim, the reason for which Jesus came into the world is contained completely in a phrase which is our program (...): Jesus came to “die for his people.”

(...) Jesus died for his people, which was first of all the Hebrew people and then for all humanity. Jesus was always ready to “die for his people.” His life reflects this is the most resplendent way.

He went out to his public life bringing the light of wisdom to those who were in darkness. From the very start, they already wanted to stone him, but his hour had not yet come. First he had to live three years of heroic service to his neighbour.

Now, how did Jesus put himself at the disposal of others in order to “die for his people?”

By going out to heal the crippled, the blind, the paralytics, those who were rejected by a society that considered suffering a consequence of sin. By going out to sinners and public sinners, whores and robbers. By feeding the hungry to the point of working miracles for them like the multiplication of loaves and fish. By freeing the possessed.

By raising Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus from the dead through his divine power, magnificent and unique actions that he alone could do; satisfying the soul as well as the body by giving himself as bread; cleansing the soul as well as the body by forgiving sins, by consecrating married life with his blessing, by putting in the heart of all the seed of children of God as well as children of men and women; by telling his disciples to do as he did, so that humanity would never be deprived of the heavenly bread as well as of the earthly bread....

To those who give their lives totally to him, even if only spiritually, he promised the hundredfold in this world; he promised extraordinary effects to persistent prayer.

He gave everything to everyone without discrimination, preferring those who were most in need.

(...) This is how we die for our people.

Today the poor, the blind, the dead, sinners... are different, they might have other names: those who are dependent on drugs, the marginalized the disabled, people with a partial vision of life, only an earthly vision for example, people who hate, who commit crimes against life at every age and the most absurd immorality. We have children who are alone because of divorce, often on their own because they are without a family, people who are sick, dying because they are without money, elderly persons who are abandoned, youth who are hallucinated, off tracked and imprisoned,... **Today, Jesus would come to “die for these people”: to save them from all these evils. But Jesus came twenty centuries ago. Now he wants to return through us. Jesus was young: he wants to return especially through young people!**

Don not let this chance slip away: it could be fatal, it could even be that young people whose hearts you have broadened through your great universal Ideal, in not finding at once what they can do in order to put into practice the love they learned, may get involved with other people, who do not know Jesus and therefore will disappoint them in the future.

“Die for your people” and draw near the young people you meet into this daily caring service, without respite, in your neighbourhoods, in schools, on the streets, in all the environments.

And may this Christmas be for everyone a Christmas of fire!

(To the Gen, Rocca di Papa, Novembre 3, 1977)