



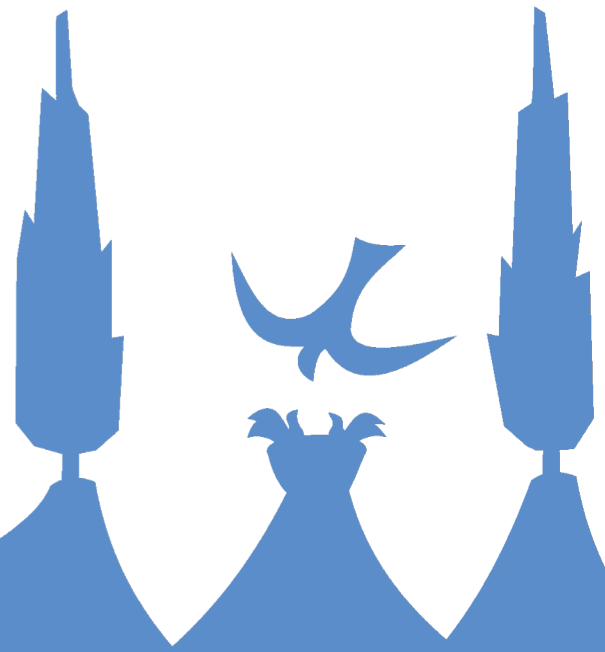
Cavanis Lay Fraternity
Sacred Heart House, CAVANIS INSTITUTE
Via Col Draga - Possagno (TV)

INVISIBLE MONASTERY

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Dear friends,

In the Liturgy of the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time (which occurs as I work on this text), we can hear the first words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news”*. Jesus’ first word is a strong invitation to conversion. In the New Testament often uses the verb *epistrèpho* that has moral connotation (it indicates the change of direction or the abandonment of a certain pattern of behavior); in this case, instead, Mark uses the verb *metanoèò*, which rather indicates a change of vision, a radical disruption of our way of thinking and which is accompanied by the verb *–believe“* (*pistèuo*). Then when the word of Jesus passes from the general level of preaching to the personal level of the vocation of the first disciples, it becomes more direct and concrete (*–Come after me“*), and the first evidence that the required conversion is taking place, it is constituted by the immediacy of the listener’s response (*–immediately they left their nets and followed him“*). In the Gospel of saint Mark the adverb *«immediately»* resounds twice. The first time in verse 18 and it has as its subject the disciples; the second time in verse 20 and it has as its subject Jesus, who immediately calls James and John, as soon as he sees them, as he had already done with Simon and Andrew (this second *«immediately»* was rightly introduced by the new translation of the CEI, while the previous one omitted it). The *«immediately»* response of the disciples is made possible by the *«immediately»* with which Jesus calls, without first weighing the qualities of the disciples or evaluating whether they will follow him to the end. Indeed, the whole story narrated by saint Mark will show that they will fail to do so; if they now *–abandon everything“* to follow Jesus, at the end of the story, in Gethsemane, they *–all abandon“* Jesus to flee elsewhere (Mark 14:50, in Greek there is the same verb used to indicate the abandonment of the nets). The Risen One will then return to call a second time precisely those who had abandoned him. This had also happened to Jonah: God had



not chosen another envoy, but had returned to call the one who had fled. Perseverance in following and obedience to the word that calls do not depend primarily on human qualities and resources, but on the faithfulness of God who always returns to call –a second time“. It is the faithfulness of his call that inspires the faithfulness of our response. I think that these reflections can well be traced back to our journey as FLC, sustained - as we are - by a strong desire for refoundation: may the Lord accompany us on this journey of conversion and help us to change the way we look, in our daily life as much as in our missionary and pastoral commitment!



From the Holy Gospel according the Saint Mark (1, 14-20)

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

At the school of Fr. Mark Cavanis...



Fr. Diego Spadotto, 11/15/2023, in www.cavanis.org

Fr. Mark, a very practical man, reminds (...) that Christ became poor to enrich us but remained poor, his fulfillment was the Father. Exodus to the Father, true promised land, is the eschatological meaning of Fr. Mark Cavanis' life –all for the youth“, from the bondage of things to the freedom of God's children. The choice must be made with strong determination, a true –Eucharistic transformation“ : –offer your mortal bodies as a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God“ .

–Everything for the youth“ without limitation of time, energy and hope for fruit in God's time, even when emergencies/crises add up and stratify.

How to do it? Fr. Mark teaches it, even though he has led a –running“ life on the road.

"Everything for young people," and when he wants to take the time to stop for a moment of rest, he realizes that he was as if besieged by a thousand opportunities to be seized, a thousand voices that demanded to be heard, a thousand situations that demanded his presence. To listen one has to stop, to see better one has to focus one's interest in a specific thing, to choose in freedom, to have conscious goals beyond appearances, performance anxiety, the desire to have it all and now. Patience, virtue of the strong, of Fr. Mark, in faith and hope that does not disappoint.

Without a real goal, the departure will never have an outcome; if you do not sow in the right time, you will only reap wind. Fr. Mark, often repeats: whatever the reason things don't work, it is never a reason to lose the serenity and peace to try again and again to make them work.

He then reminds us with his usual and good-natured humor that having an open mind is a virtue, but it does not have to be so open as to let the brain out, that faith, science and religion respond to different and complementary needs of the human being, are different expressions and tools of human that we are. They are different manifestations of human existence, of what we desire, of what we seek, expressions of our desire to discover new horizons and worlds, whether external or internal. With good humor, he alerts young people who listen to him willingly, precisely for this reason: many times, the tired, mediocre life is a sign of a deep thirst for God. Our failures are usually misguided attempts to find what we desire most. Fr. Mark, enthusiastically spends all his time for the congregation and to teach young people to hunger and thirst for the future, for dignity, for solidarity and justice, and not to get trapped in small desires, small satisfactions, illusions of love, because “the Lord wants to give us the fullness of love”