



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

INVISIBLE MONASTERY

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It is peculiar that the first Sunday following the Solemnity of Pentecost is dedicated to the great mystery of the Trinity of God: it is as if the gift of the Holy Spirit (whom Jesus had said would lead us to the whole truth) leads us precisely into the very heart of God's mystery to illuminate it. And this is no cerebral theological abstraction divorced from reality! If God is Trinity, then he is first and intimately a force of relationship. The liturgy's preface suggests a key to us by saying, "For with your Only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit you are one God, one Lord: not in the unity of a single person, but in a Trinity of one substance".

Of the experience of God, to which the gift of the Holy Spirit introduces us and of which Christ is the mediator, the Father is responsible; and if God is Trinity, that is, unceasing circulation of love between the three persons, then at the basis of his initiative to involve us in this dynamism proper to his fullness, it lies the most total and absolute gratuitousness. God is not a king who without subjects that cannot call himself such, nor a general who without an army that sees his role destitute of meaning; "You have no need of our praise (...) our hymns of blessing do not increase your glory, but they obtain for us the grace that saves us," recites another preface of Ordinary Time and reveals the extraordinary freedom of an initiative not conditioned by anything but the love that binds the Creator to the creature. Proceeding by analogy

(the only way to guide us to the understanding of a datum that so far surpasses us) the Word of God suggests that we think of the father/son relationship with a substantial difference, however: on the level of nature, we are children insofar as generated by our parents and ours is therefore a "suffered" sonship, in the sense that it is independent of our will; on the level of grace, on the other hand, ours is a received sonship. Received as a gift - certainly - but welcomed in freedom. Guiding us in the circulation of Trinitarian love is the Holy Spirit, but it is we who invoke and welcome him as our guide. This is why St. Paul, in the second reading, reminds us that "all those who are led by the Spirit of God, are children of God"; to be truly children it is not enough to be generated through Baptism, it is necessary that God's initiative be matched by the assent of our will. In every relationship the engine that drives it to evolve and grow is constituted by reciprocity: the mystery of the Trinity, contemplated today in the liturgy, wants exactly to lead us to this: to a relationship that is authentic and profound and therefore conscious and corresponding. Driven by this premise we want to look to our venerable founders, Fr. Anthony and Fr. Mark Cavanis, who made the trait of fatherhood the constitutive element of their charismatic action: *iuventutis vere parentes!* And this trait was translated into a style of relationship that they wished to prevail in the works of their apostolate: first fathers than teachers. Let us entrust to their intercession the path of our FLC to learn to meekly welcome the Spirit's guidance even in the future associative choices we are about to make.



**From the holy gospel according to
saint Matthew (28, 16 - 20)**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

The brief reflection I bring to you does not come from the codified Cavanis sources, but from the archive of my memory.



It could have been the school year 1963-64 or 1964-65; in the month of May, we elementary school students were led to the oratory by our beloved teacher, Fr. Diego Dogliani, and there we followed, fascinated and attentive, the captivating preaching exercise entrusted to brothers who were having training, still in theological and university formation, for what would later be their ministry: the education of children. I have been extraordinarily impressed by a story, under one of these circumstances, that Fr. Diego Spadotto (then very young!), using the technique of the exemplum to lead us to an edifying conclusion on a moral or spiritual level, has remained extraordinarily impressed on me.

A very skilled juggler, capable of the most extraordinary games of skill, performed one day at the king's court, in the presence of all the dignitaries and the monarch himself. After a series of tests of dexterity that earned him the sympathy of all present, he announced that he wanted to produce himself in a most difficult exercise for which he had been preparing for a very long time. After asking one of those present to hold between the forefinger and thumb of his right hand a needle with the eye pointing upward, he went to the opposite end of the large hall in which his performance was taking place; holding a very thin silk thread in his hand, he took a running start, crossed the entire hall and, without the slightest hesitation, succeeded in threading the thread through the eye of the needle. The feat was applauded at length, and the king himself wanted to ask him how he could have achieved such a level of skill. The juggler replied that he had been practicing exclusively and persistently for more than eight hours a day, every day, for more than twenty years. The Sovereign, hearing the answer, intimated to the guards to take the juggler to prison, commenting bitterly, "This is what he deserves who wastes such a precious commodity as the time we are given for such a futile thing!"

I'm not sure why that story has stuck with me so strongly that I remember it perfectly more than sixty years later, but it is certain that it has helped me to think ever since about the need to make good use of the time we are given as a gift to accomplish truly great things. The approaching deadline of next July at Sacred Heart House reminds us of that extraordinary gift that the FLC has been to us and to the congregation and it urges us to employ well our time, resources and sensitivity to reinvigorate its strength and to renew our awareness.