



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

INVISIBLE MONASTERY

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Dear friends!

I am reading that extraordinary catechesis of Luke on prayer that the evangelist develops in the first part of chapter 18 of his Gospel; initially the text insists on the need to pray always, without getting tired, then it seems to shift rather to how one should pray, and it does so through an antinomic literary structure, typical of sapiential culture. When Jesus wants to lead the disciple into that space where the quality of the man - God relationship is revealed, namely prayer, he does not go into describing stages, techniques, characteristics of prayer, but prefers to introduce a concrete experience. We are offered two models (the Pharisee and the publican) whose actions, in parallel, stand opposite from each other. In the conclusion of the gospel Jesus himself offers the key to interpreting the two models and recognizing the one to be conformed to ("I say to you, this one, unlike the other, returned to his home justified, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted").

In fact, the Pharisee's prayer is translated into a correct bodily attitude: «standing» (v. 11), with his head erect, he raises his arms upward. This is the normal posture of the believer at the moment of prayer. However, the physical gaze does not correspond to the gaze of the heart, the only



one that, in depth, directs prayer. The Pharisee's heart, as well as his prayer, are folded into his own 'self': the Pharisee «prays to himself (lit. 'before himself') » (v.11). The publican, on the other hand, is lost and confused in the temple: he is not able to assume the normal behavior of those who pray; he is almost afraid to break down the barrier that separates him from God. He is kneaded by his own sin: that is why «he did not dare to lift his eyes to heaven» (v. 13). His existential situation places him among those who have fallen away: that is why «he stands at a distance». The only gesture he can make is to express his miserable situation: he «beat his chest». But the gaze of the heart acquires a vertical movement; from the awareness of one's own poverty, the face of prayer, through the cry, acquires the right orientation and meets the gaze of God. The Pharisee looks to God in the light of his own works and so, content with what he does, in the end he does not feel much need to receive anything from God; lacking in this man's prayer and life is the slightest awareness of God's gratuitousness. Instead, the essentiality with which the publican expresses his prayer is striking: «O God, have mercy on me



a sinner» (v. 13). Aware that he is a sinner, he feels in need of change and, above all, he knows that he cannot demand anything from God. He has nothing to boast and nothing to demand. He can only ask. He relies on God, not on himself. I am inclined to think how much our prayer also needs authenticity; how much it must feed on the sense of our limitation to lean rather on God's infinite mercy. And I think this feeling should be our own not only as individuals, but it should be a distinctive feature of our FLC. We should aspire to make our association a humble instrument of communion and prayer in support of the beloved Congregation of the Schools of Charity and for the rooting and spreading of the educational charism of fathers Anthony and Mark Cavanis.



**From the holy Gospel according to
saint Luke (18, 9-14)**

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”



From the Statute of the Lay Cavanis Fraternity:

Art. 3. PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION

1. The members of the Cavanis Lay Fraternity, called to new life in Christ through Baptism, commit themselves to "nourish the hidden life with Christ in God" (Col. 3, 3) in order to grow, through the exercise of discipleship, unto "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4, 13). In particular:
 - a. dedicating certain and daily times to prayer, especially ensuring the recitation of Morning Lauds and Vespers;
 - b. reading with faith the sacred texts and above all the Holy Gospel according to the practice of "lectio divina";
 - c. fervently looking after sacramental practice and reserving a special space for the Eucharist - the heart and center of Christian life;
 - d. practicing, at least weekly, the so-called "revision of life" to read any shortcomings in the light of the Spirit and intervene to correct them;
 - e. striving to respect the laws of God, the precepts of the Church and her Magisterium.