

Filling the country with the knowledge of the Lord

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In the first Reading, the Prophet Isaiah announces what would happen many centuries after him, what has changed the history of humanity: "a shoot springs from the stock of Jesse". Just from this human stock, cause of all humanity's evils, is sprung this shoot and the Saviour has come to us. He has brought with him the whole reality of both human and divine life. He has brought life where there was death, peace where there were conflicts and war. On him was the Spirit of the Lord. This Son of God is always united with the Father and is never separated from the Holy Spirit. This man is full of Holy Spirit and is led by him in every moment of his life. He is the model of man. He is the revelation of God and the revelation of man. He is the truth of God and at the same time the truth of man. He is what we are called to be, this is our truth. What we are now is false. Only in him is our reality, I should say physically in him, remaining in him, being him.

Only in him it is possible to make peace. For us it is not impossible to make the bear and the cow, or the lion and the ox, graze together.

The salvation that Jesus, God-man, has brought to us penetrates into the bottom of every man's heart. He knows what is there and causes the evil, "he does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict by hearsay", he defends every man with justice, he is engaged "to make" everyman in his likeness, in his own image. He offers shelter to the forsaken, to those who cannot find their way in life.

And when a human being has experienced this mighty rescuing action in himself, this man has acquired the "knowledge of the Lord". Nobody knows the Lord unless he has received his rescuing action, especially planned for him.

And the promise of Isaiah is: "the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters swell the sea".

The Church does exist in order to fulfil this promise. And the Church is mostly made up of laypeople who are called to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord.

The Catholic Action, this part of the laity who has preceded and given rise to many forms of apostolate, keeps and needs its own fundamental characteristics: spiritual life, formative goal and direct cooperation with the hierarchy. In other words, these characteristics might be so described: united to its hierarchy, the Catholic Action needs every day, with more and more strength, a renewed experience and knowledge of God in order to form itself and to form other people in their journey to meet Jesus, so that they also may reach the knowledge of the Lord which brings us salvation in all the uneasiness of our life.

In this way Jesus Christ's true peace will be achieved, which brings into social life the salvation that our Saviour brought to us 2000 years ago.

The fruits which mark the Catholic Action should be its laypeople formed in such a way as to reach maturity and to be able to bring the rescuing presence of Jesus Christ into the field of temporal realities.

The Catholic Action's power will always be the transforming strength of its meeting Jesus Christ, which proved efficacious until death in so many martyrs that God has granted to the Catholic Action.

In putting this strength and these fruits of its life at the hierarchy's disposal, the Catholic Action does not lose either freedom in organizing its initiatives or diversity in its ways of organization. It makes good use of its charism, a gift of God for the service and the benefit of the whole body. In this way it offers the hierarchy a very important service: that of forming laypeople who in general miss instruments for evangelizing the world.

In concluding this homily, let us listen to the words of the Gospel: "Filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, Jesus said: "I bless you, Father Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to the mere children"".

These are the children whom the Father has granted to know his Son, to experiment in this life the power of the salvation that Jesus gives and the strength of the laypeople's witness before those who in the world wait for light.

May the Catholic Action never lose either its simplicity or its strength to bear witness. Amen

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Catholic Action: lay faithful who live the ever newness of the Gospel and are a sign of communion

THE LASTING ACTUALITY OF A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT