



61st Year

May 12, 2013

Pamphlet #19 (3128)

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES

The of Christ is also the life of the Church. Whatever occurred from the moment of Christ's conception in the virginal womb of the All Holy Virgin Mary until the passion and the Cross and His Resurrection, but also until His Ascension to the heavens, not only did not remain a simple recollection but became the action of the Church. From the day of Pentecost, with the founding of the first Church of the Apostles until today's form of the Church and until the close of age, the presence of the grace of the Holy Spirit unites in an unbreakable divine bond, the body of the Church with the head of the body who is Christ. "And he is the head of the body of the Church" (Col. 1:18).

Christ is the head of the God-formed body of the Church. And we are his members, as again the Apostle stresses, "that we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones" (Eph. 5:30). In other words, we believers of the Church have an immediate bond of grace with Christ. We become by grace flesh of His flesh and bones of His bones. The bond of the members of the Church with Christ is so great and awesome that only as one body is it perceived and does it exist.

Miracles of the Apostles a proof of genuineness and unity. The All Holy Spirit wized the Apostles to preach, to teach and to interpret in a divinely inspired manner, the sacred heritage of the Gospel of Christ. To certify the truth of their preaching, many miracles accompanied which cured sick people and cast out demons.

The apostle Luke writes that "in those days by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people." (Acts 5:12). In other words, to whomever the Apostles stretched out their hands many miracles occurred among the people of Jerusalem who were crowding before them.

It is the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of the Lord after His Resurrection. "17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils:they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover." (Mk. 16:17-18). He told His disciples that in their work signs, miracles shall accompany them. They shall cast out demons and with the laying on of their hands they shall heal the sick. Words which became action and assure the genuineness of the preaching of the Apostles.

And all these divine miracles were happening in a spirit of harmony and unity between the first faithful members of the Apostolic Church. With the expression "ομοθυμαδόν" "omothymadon", which means all together, the wondrous unity of the first Church is imprinted. They were united by: 1) one faith in one person, Christ. 2) one baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as the Ap. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).

Wonder and hesitation at the genuineness of the preaching. Such a wondrous communion of saints caused the wonder of those who couldn't pass the doorstep of faith. And they remained outside, hesitant observers to the phenomenon of the grace of God, in the life of the Apostles. "No one dared become attached to them" (Acts 5:13), writes the Ap. Luke. Those who didn't have the moral fortitude and enlightenment to recognize Him who with His Crucifixion and Resurrection abolished death and condemned sin didn't dare go with the Apostles. He who with His Crucifixion and Resurrection abolished death and condemned sin. He who sent the Comforter to assure in a wondrous manner, the truth of His words and of His works.

This happens to many people who see the truth but don't follow it, because they fear maybe they might be misunderstood or lose something from their personal life or maybe they might make a mistake in their choice and be bound to promises which demand faithful keeping. For all those who doubt or fear to accept faith in Christ, the Lord himself gives an answer: "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt. 11:29).

In other words, the Lord urges whoever hesitates to come near Him and to support themselves in His kindness, His understanding, His leniency. And He will help them to believe in Him. The burden of faith He will lighten because whatever people think is impossible to be achieved, it is possible for Him as God to make a reality.

The reactions against the divine preaching. Fanaticism and envy overcame the High Priests of the Law of the Old Testament and the heresy of the Sadducees who didn't believe in the resurrection, "there is no resurrection" (Mt. 22:23). "They were filled with jealousy" writes the Ap. Luke, in other words, they were overcome by jealousy, because they considered themselves as the authentic keepers of the Law. And this blinded them spiritually, so that they consider the miraculous actions of the Apostles as deception and insult.

Whereas grace and truth "happened through Jesus Christ" says the evangelist John. Whatever the law of Moses was to give, it gave. Now the Lawgiver Christ hands down the perfect law, the law of grace, the light of the Gospel. The rulers of the Jewish people would not accept this and they "And they laid their hands upon the Apostles" (Acts 5:18). The devil envied the glory of God and, wherever this appears in the world, he tries to slander and to prevent it using the worldly authorities also. Furthermore there is no possibility of agreement between God and the devil: "What have we to do with thee, Jesus Son of God?" the possessed man of the Gergesenes said (Mt. 8:29). However God in a wondrous manner then also opened the door of the prison and freed the Apostles. But He also always opens the road for the ministry of His Gospel.

The attitude of the people of our time toward preaching of the Apostles. In our age the Gospel is preached freely. Many people however do not cease facing it with it with indifference or hesitation and others with a good disposition. Indifference is a responsibility of choice, a lack of disposition for which we will give account. The hesitations and the disbelief may be surpassed because God gives many opportunities so as to stir up our eagerness to come to know the truth.

For whoever is struggling to preserve their faith in the difficult times we are undergoing, the words of the angel to the Apostles, while he was taking them out in an amazing manner from the prison, is a message of strengthening and encouragement: "Go, and standing speak ... all the words of this life" Acts 5:20). That they not stop but continue their journey and be preaching the words which lead to life, true life, the life of Christ, eternal life. This is the message of the Lord to all strugglers, to all faithful members of His Church.

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