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MEETING PER L'AMICIZIA FRA I POPOLI
EMERGENZA UOMO
18-24 AGOSTO 2013 - RIMINI FIERA

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What awakens humanity. Testimony

From the wisdom of the Buddha to the madness of Christ

Rimini, 22nd August 2013 –The encounter with History and people who experienced it is important to understand where we are heading to. At 3 P.M. in D5 Auditorium at the Meeting of Rimini, Davide Perillo, director of the monthly magazine Traces, presents with these words the testimony of Claire Ly, a Cambodian journalist and writer, professor at the Institute of Science and Theology of Religions in Marseille.

Claire tells the story of her conversion from Buddhism to Christianity, and she divides it into three steps: the encounter with the Western God, Jesus' gospel and the Eucharistic encounter. Her life has been marked by grief: the communist regime of the 'the Khmer Rouge' exterminated her family, father, brothers and husband, shot because they were considered as imperialists. She, a professor of philosophy with a two year old son and another in her womb, was considered as an intellectual who needed to be 're-educated' and she was sent to a forced-labor camp into a paddy field. "Why me?" she asks "according to the Karma if someone is suffering it is because he did something wrong, but I didn't do anything. I started to insult the Western God, every day, to vent my anger, until one day in the paddy a strange silence, an 'inhabited' silence fell down. That silence made me not only feel my pain, but the others as well for the first time. "

In evil God made himself present, on a tender silence. Claire Ly remembers that in 1980 she managed to escape to France, where she was received as a political refugee. Without money, she received help from the pastor and the parish priest. It was the priest who gave her newspapers, books and magazines, and in one of these Claire read the encyclical 'Dives in Misericordia' of John Paul II. Therefore she felt the desire to read the gospel, and this is the second stage of his journey to conversion: "Jesus of Nazareth captivated me with his humanity, he was a beggar like me. This call gave me courage and I wasn't afraid anymore. I felt free to surrender myself."

The third major encounter Ly lived was with the Eucharist. During a vacation she took part in a mass and fixed her eyes upon the Holy Bread. "In that moment I felt a call: God was on his knees in front of my woman's weakness. At that moment I said 'yes I want to be a Jesus' disciple'. We are all sent to meet Jesus in Galilee because we do have to meet the

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man.”

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In 1983, Claire received the baptism. It is after her rebirth in Christ that the story of her life gets moving. Never denying her Buddhist roots, with infinite gentleness Claire decided to go back with her children in the land and in the same places where her family were murdered. In that place a mangrove forest grows with a foul scent but also with beautiful flowers around. Claire shows the picture of a flower together with a crucifix's picture from the church in her village, "an opening to love, I invite you to dream with me about a big hug which collects all people, Christians and non-Christians" .

Davide Perillo concludes the meeting by stating: "In front of this story of life, our "self" flourishes again. This is why in this year's Meeting there have been so many meetings with testimonies, where you can see many 'self' flourish again".

(C.C.)

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