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Evangelii Gaudium: challenges. From Latin America to Italy

Rimini, August 29th, 2014 – Today’s talk was a dialogue between Msgr. Gualtiero Bassetti, Bishop of Perugia, and Guzmàn Carriguiry, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, which emphasized the importance of *Evangelii Gaudium*, held in this morning at 11:15 in the Salone Intesa Sanpaolo D5 thanks to the collaboration with the National Service of CEI for the cultural project. The talk was introduced by Roberto Fontolan, Director of the Communion and Liberation International Center.

Starting with the first chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, published in 2013, Cardinal Bassetti began his speech by answering the question: “What does Pope Francis ask at his Church?” Msgr. Bassetti underlined the central position of man, “that man for whom Christ become flesh.” “After all,” said Bassetti, “it cannot be different because the Exhortation itself is another proposal of the Church’s mission towards man, so that he appears starting from Christ’s gaze.”

From the Cardinal’s words we can understand the importance of a document “capable of communicating the joy of the Gospel and of filling the heart and the whole life those who meet Jesus.” Bossetti explained that this joyful style is already present in the first lines. It is a “systematic” text, in which Bergoglio underlines and deepens the lines of his teachings. From the Cardinal’s words appears the image of a Church that – during and exceptional and delicate historical moment – has to listen to the provocations coming from Latin America.

It is not possible to remain indifferent to the election of a Pope “coming from the ends of the earth,” this event brought periphery to the center. The freshness of this pontificate, full of features of the Latin American Church, is a sign of great hope and it is urging the Church to come out from itself: ecclesial life must not be reduced to a self-referencing lab. *Evangelii Gaudium* proposes a missionary Church, oriented to pastoral conversion, which is not a sentimental reconciliation, but it means speaking the language of modernity.

“Mercy and discernment,” concluded the Cardinal, “should be the key words of every Christian community” and mentioning Pope Francis’ appeal during his last travel to Korea, invited everyone to “build a versatile and creative Church.”

The dialogue about the Latin American challenges continued with the speech of Carriguiry. According to the Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, the election of Pope Francis represents an innovative fact “with unpredictable consequences for the Catholic Church and for all of Latin America.” In these lands a good part of the future of the Church is decided. “What before was considered a periphery, has now invaded the Catholic world.”

The speaker highlighted the features of Francis’ pontificate and the situation of the Church in Latin America, identifying the tight connection that unites the current Pope with his land. “It is a historical situation that cannot be ignored;” concluded the Secretary, “with Pope Francis we are living an evangelical revolution that includes a political vision of the Gospel, which can help the people and lead us to a more mature democracy.”

(F.R., L.T.)



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