

Press release no. 26  
36<sup>th</sup> EDITION  
MEETING FOR THE FRIENDSHIP AMONGST THE PEOPLES  
#meeting15  
20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August Rimini Fiera

## **What is this lack a lack of, oh heart, of which all of a sudden you are full? Father Lepori presents the Meeting**

**Rimini, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015** – With a long-lasting, touched applause the people of has greeted, at the end of his report, father Mauro Giuseppe Lepori, abbot general of the Cistercian order. The auditorium B3 was absurdly overcrowded. In order to display the theme of the 36<sup>th</sup> edition (Luzi's verse, the word "lack"), Lepori has got a constant incitement in it. One cannot escape from lack, for it is "a slow, muddy river that slows up to the sea without realizing". The poet is a prophet and incites us to go out of ourselves. Lack, heart, fullness: these are the poet's words that the Meeting has wanted as its plan. For this reason – Lepori adds – the heart can never lie but instead recognize the "fullness of its lack".

How is it possible to become aware of this lack in which the heart languishes? asks the lecturer. There is that "trait" – a call, a lightning in the night, a face – that doesn't depend on us, like an arrow that, all of a sudden, pierces through the heart and reawakens it. This is that story of the Rich Young Ruler saying "what else am I missing?", and the "follow Me" of the Lord: "Here, that day, that blurry disquiet is in front of a look which brings it express – or maybe, to simply betray – all the abyss of the lack that fills as a question to Who, on His own, can respond to the yearning of the heart. I don't know if there is in the Gospel – and then, in all human history – a more basic example of the religious sense of a man, expressed to Christ's face. So much so that it never told again, for anybody else: Jesus felt a love for him".

"Follow Me" added the religious "means that what is missing it's me, because you only miss me". These days, underlined father Lepori, the charismatics created by the Holy Spirit are those who permit the reproducing of this experience of lack and fullness. However, there is a big temptation to who the devil presents to Christ's heart: "You can forgive and die for men but you don't really miss them..." Just like in the episode of Capernaum: without His fullness life is empty, meaningless, without joy, so they leaved. But, to this temptation it's Peter himself – therefore men's heart – who replies: "Lord, how could we part from You? If You miss, it is life that is missing!" Peter will betray, disavow, sin, but he will never fail to the confession of this desire of fullness. And that defeats the sumptuous temptation against the Christian event.

"I miss you!", father Lepori observed, is a dramatic refrain which recurs repeatedly in literature, in music, in cinematography. A big grief in men's hearts, for they has been created to be fulfilled by relationship, by friendship. Ma the most sensation discovery is that Christ the Lord has revealed to the whole humankind that "the Father misses men infinitely more than men miss the Father". In this we find also the meaning of mercy: "Mercy is because the Father misses us", because in God's heart there is always a place for us. Indeed, reaffirms the lecturer, "God misses us *way* more than we miss Him".

At this point of Lepori's lecture some themes (precious to Pope Francis) come to light: "Christ's mission – the spread of His Kingdom – is cross and resurrection, because He shares the Father's worry to find what is missing, and yet They wait to celebrate its recovery. But if we start our mission by letting Him find us, it is like there is nothing but a celebration to broadcast, to show, to share with everybody". Here the discovery that even the last of the fallens, actually, "the last of the fallen above all, has in God's heart an endless space of wait, desire, an abyss of merciful love which is aflame to embrace, to kiss, who is lost".

The term "kiss" isn't used here casually. Jesus told to the Samaritan that God looks for worshippers. Lepori observes how the Italian word for "worship", *adorare*, comes from the Latin *ad os*, which means "

so it implies the idea of kissing too. Actually, Christian worshipping is precisely "staying in the hug and the kiss of a God to whom one always come back". But beware; that is not a sentence linked to a spiritual world ditched from everyday reality. Differently, it determines a precise model: "What new culture, what new world, what solution different from the many tragic problems of the world of today would spread if we learned, from God's hug, to go towards everybody, and welcome everybody, with the awareness – then the

proof – that God is missing every human being, with His hug and His kiss, communicating Himself as Love, as Mercy! What a revolution with every struggle for liberty, justice, and peace!” It is not about optimism: it is about a tenacious diligence to change oneself – and, first of all, it is about to stay and live with Him. Jesus was looking for that when he called the Rich Young Ruler by saying “Follow Me!”. “He didn’t asked him to “change his life” explains father Mauro “but rather to live with Him, because this is what really change life, the true life”.

That is how the Christian life is always about mission, “because it is life with Christ that saves – the communion with Him”. “So our real life, our human life, our humble everyday life, becomes an explicit drama, the mystery revealed, mystery of the communion with Him, in everything, with everyone, forever. With Him to follow, with Him that is given and yet is missed, like as every step was a breath, a heartbeat that recreates life”.

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