



Pope: need to be the living signs of our encounter with Jesus



Pope Francis on 21 September met some 300 participants in the International Meeting of Academic Centres and Schools of New Evangelization and spoke to them about how to make the hearts of men and women of our times burn like those of the disciples of Emmaus.

By Robin Gomes

The international meeting had as its theme, "Is it possible to meet God? The paths of the New Evangelization". In this regard, the Pope spoke about how to kindle the desire for God in our times despite the signs that obscure Him. Many, he said, have the desire of God within, but are unable to recognize His closeness, as it happened with the disciples of Emmaus.

The challenge, therefore, is of making the heart "burn". For many, the Pope pointed out, the Church is a cold memory of the past, with many in the west feeling it does not understand them and their needs. Some consider it as too weak in relation to the world, while others consider it too powerful in the face of great poverties of the world.

Apparent wellbeing

But what one should really be worried about, the Pope said, is a worldly Church that follows the world's criteria of success, forgetting that it exists not to proclaim itself but Jesus. Thus, it ends up being more of a museum piece than a simple and happy home of the Father. It is a temptation to be like a museum where everything is in the right place.

The Pope said that there are many whom the Father wants them to feel at home – our brothers and sisters who are caught up in the frenzy of technology but carry deep wounds within, struggling for a stable job or anesthetized by an external wellbeing that distracts them from making courageous choices.

The Pope said there are many next to us living in a frenzy slavery to what they think makes them feel better and forget the taste of life; the beauty of a large and generous family that expands the heart; the brightness in the eyes of children that no smartphone can give; the joy of simple things; the serenity that gives way to prayer.

Need to love and be loved

The Holy Father said that what they ask, corresponds to the deepest need to love and of being loved, of being accepted for what they are, of finding peace of heart and a more lasting joy than entertainment.

The Pope said that we find all this in the person of Jesus and our mission is to meet our contemporaries to make known to them His love, not so much by teaching, never by judging, but by becoming their companions on the road.

Transmitting God, the Pope explained, is not talking about God and proving His existence, which even the devil knows. Proclaiming the Lord is witnessing to the joy of knowing Him, helping to live the beauty of meeting Him.

Encounter builds love and faith

Hence, the heart of the message that the Church is asked to proclaim is: "God is love. Jesus Christ loves you, He gave His life to save you, and now He is alive at your side every day". It is from this that Christian life develops.

Since encounters help the faith to grow, the Pope said, Christians need to approach those in need, build bridges, serve those who suffer, care for the poor, anoint with patience those nearby, comfort those who are discouraged and bless those who harm us. "In this way, we become living signs of the Love we proclaim," the Pope added.