



Allocutio



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Allocutio: The Legionary and the Trinity

I want to say a word about the Trinitarian nature of Legion of Mary spirituality. You may not realize the extent to which you live it.

Healthy spirituality must not cower before the reality of the Heavenly Father's creation. Healthy Catholic theology for example never runs from any authentic discovery in the field of science but critically studies it with a view on the one hand to seeing if it might assist our understanding of God and his ways or to understand our nature as creatures; yet we remain alert on the other hand to the limitations of human knowledge and take care not to canonize human knowledge. In particular we have to make solid contact with what is most important for us in creation, namely our own human nature, with our world of human flesh even with its brokenness under the burden of sin. All of our nature which includes our journey through birth, growth and decay, our need of others and our mutual dependency, our capacity to transmit life to offspring who will keep history moving to its destiny, our differing gifts and talents as social beings, all this belongs to the creative world of God our Father. All of this might have been a delightful challenge had it not been soured by sin. Because of sin our nature tends to pull us down and into darker responses to the goods God the Father has given us. Part of sin's effect can be to lead us to distort nature and its tendencies and not to trust, but to take refuge in escapes. Some suffer psychiatric evasions of reality due to no great fault of theirs; others take refuge in substance abuse, or denial in various forms. None of which is healthy. All of this goes against the will of the heavenly Father. Into this contaminated world, in order to redeem it, God the Father sent his son.

We in the Legion line up behind that woman who permitted the Word of God to enter our world. She belonged to a special people who had been listening all along with various levels of capacity and intention to the divine Word. From the moment human nature failed us in Adam and Eve's; God has signaled the redemption of human kind, a message given to a woman about her offspring. And so the journey of humanity through time and in particular among the Jews has given us a deposit of personal incidents, historical events and reflections and prayers which have been helping to undo sin. All of this reaches its fulfillment and high point in the person of Jesus Christ, the complete reflection of both God and humanity! Yes, Jesus is humanity at its peak since he came to restore to pristine condition the race of fallen Adam. The word of God is about Jesus because he is the eternal Word.

The work of the Holy Spirit in us is to apply the healing power of the divine Word to our fallen nature. But before I come to speak of that let me touch on a few aberrations that can take place.

In the realm of nature we can either deny issues around it or over-exaggerate it. For example some modern people will say that there is nothing beyond this world than what we can observe with our senses; it is a world of pot luck and hard luck and good luck; the strongest survive, so look after yourself. Others deny nature. They may hide their heads in the sand about problems around them, be it in their personal lives or in society, others will be critical about all valid human efforts to study nature. And sometimes religion can be dressed up with these dispositions. One person in the name of prayer or the cause of God will neglect duties to family or work; others, usually protestant, will put too literal an interpretation on scripture and say God made the world in seven of our days. But we do well to pay attention to St. Paul in the letter to the Romans who points out that we do indeed have a capacity to interpret the will of God in nature and know his ways.



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The position of certain Protestants who adopt the position of sola scriptura or indeed of Catholics who may deny that God should be attended to in how he deals with us in nature and in our ordinary lives is also imbalanced. People can use religion and scripture to distance themselves from the world of reality. While I don't have time to look at the tele-evangelists some momentary glances at them show a focus on certain texts of scripture which overlook the totality of scripture or else you sense some unconnectedness to the actual reality of life and human nature.

A healthy outlook and spirituality involves bringing the totality of God's word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bear on our full world and on human nature and particularly on my life so that fallen nature is led to a true healing. For this to take place prayer is essential. It is very clear that prayer is the world of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert where he prayed and fasted for forty nights, where he reflected and struggled with the word of God in his deepening of his mission to save fallen mankind. And prayer is the space we make for the Holy Spirit to help us know our true nature by the power of God's Word and in which the Holy Spirit can apply the healing unction brought by that Word. And when this work of healing us is beyond our understanding or capacity, as it is, it is the Holy Spirit who prays deep within us since the Holy Spirit is attuned to the mind of God and can do great work in us unbeknownst to ourselves.

As I said the Legion of Mary is one definite group of the faithful wherein all of this comes together. In your work you meet nature, often in its toughest and rawest. You do not run from it or hide from it. You listen to God's Word to try and get help to know better and with deeper understanding what to do. And the Legion, like Mary its leader, above all else, tries to allow the Holy Spirit act in it so the greatest fruitfulness can take place. That is why prayer is very much part of your lives and has to be. Prayer is the secret of your success. And without prayer there will be no real fruit.

In dealing with that nature of human beings, despite its contamination by sin, you are in contact with the domain of God the Father. In reflecting with Mary on the Word you are in contact with the area of the Second Person of the Trinity. In your prayer you are submitting yourselves to the influence of God the Holy Spirit. Thus Legion life is a very direct engagement with the Blessed Trinity. Already you share in the triune God's life and work just as Mary did. May that become a growing realization of our life with that Trinity in Glory.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill