



Allocutio



Presentata Curia 22nd January 2015

Allocutio: A Brother among us

I spoke in the last two allocutios of the Incarnation and of the Birth of Christ. I am just taking that a step further tonight.

The meaning of the Incarnation and the birth of Christ is that in Jesus God became one of us and walked on our planet and shared our life. He did not even do it one step removed. He so became like us that everything we can go through he also shared. In effect he became a brother to us. God sent his Son to be our brother. That is what it is all about.

We have an attitude of awe before Jesus for many reasons. If he was God then can he really be one of us? He was tempted like us all but did not fall. And because he did not fall we are tempted to think that he is not quite like us. He wasn't dead very long when he arose so again we wonder is he like the rest of us who must stay in the grave a bit longer.

But just like any brother he came from a human womb, lived in a human family, did hard manual work. The fact that he had real human compassion for others when some people had harder hearts tells us he was indeed a good brother.

How are we not the best of brothers and sisters to one another? Because we let our selfish side snap at one another or have bad thoughts about one another. Or we cheat or tell others bad things about one another and so cause our relationships to become frayed so that sometimes brothers and sisters do not talk to one another out of hurt or the fear of hurt.

The reason we should not let the fact that Jesus never sinned distance us from him is because by not sinning he proved he was the best brother ever to us. He was a true brother when he forgave all those crucifying him: Jewish leaders and roman soldiers, the mocking Jewish crowd and the Gentile Governor. He asked Our Father not to hold it against us. And from the Cross instead of a rant or invective he said 7 good words that remain an inspiration to us.

The Good Brother has taught us that we belong to God's family and that there is an invitation for us to the home of God. Jesus is the Universal Brother who gathers together all God's children and calls us all to be good brothers and sisters to one another. And that is our challenge: to be brothers and sisters to all in the human race and to love and care for all, even those who are our enemy and who persecute us.

One of the great contemporary witnesses to this is Charles de Foucauld. A Frenchman who lived a wasted life until he converted. Not soon after that he spent 7 years



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in Nazareth, close to the home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph where he lived a simple life of prayer and reflecting on the Gospels in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It was there he came to grow in his understanding of Jesus as a brother and indeed as the Universal Brother. Later in the Sahara he tried to live that among the Tuareg, an Algerian Tribe remote in the Sahara who followed Islam. He lived among them as a friend and confident, a brother among brothers and sisters who did not share his faith. He was killed by a marauding gang in 1916.

When French troops called to the place three weeks later they found his Monstrance with the Consecrated Host still intact in it. The commanding officer carried that Monstrance back at the head of his troops to their base camp in one of the strangest Corpus Christi Processions ever recorded. But it symbolised what was at the heart of De Foucauld's mission: Jesus the Universal Brother present with us in our journey of life.

As we continue to think of this child who came as a brother among us we would do well to reflect on his challenge, that we join his movement to create a family of real sons and daughters of God who are indeed brothers and sisters to one another. If we are real brothers and sisters then we must care for everyone. Can we welcome the victims of war from other lands who come among us seeking refuge? Can we be happy that some who arrive here from other countries have been bought to be slaves of a sex industry? Can we be friends even to those who cause harm to others and ask them as brothers and sisters to change and still keep the door of our hearts open to them when they dismiss us. Would we be like Stephen when he was rejected and not hold it against them?

But before we think of that big world out there, there is still the call to be true brothers and sisters to each other in our homes. Mother Teresa so often said charity begins at home and so many of the macro problems have their origin in the micro world of the human family. So maybe today I might think of how I can be a good brother and sister to those around me. Is there some selfishness I need to confront?

I have often thought that in some way my mother is a sister. A very special sister. She is the sister who allowed me enter her body and who gave me life, and care when I was unable. Our lady too can be seen as a sister but a very special one. Yes a sister but also like our mothers a mother too. I note in Jn 2:12 that very early in his ministry she went from the wedding feast of Cana with Jesus and his disciples to another place in their company. She was with them from the start, a real companion, friend and sister. And in the Upper room she was there in solidarity with them. Sister or mother? Both.

Let us ask baby Jesus our brother to help us be true brothers and sisters to each other in our world.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill