



The Holy See

EUCCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION WITH THE CARDINALS RESIDENT IN ROME ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF THE HOLY FATHER

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Pauline Chapel

Tuesday, 27 June 2017

[Multimedia]

In the First Reading we heard how the dialogue continued between God and Abram, that dialogue that began with that “Go from your country...” (Gen 12:1). And in this continuing dialogue, we find three imperatives: “Arise!”, “Look!”, “Hope!”. Three imperatives which mark the path that Abram must follow and also his approach, his interior attitude: rise, look, hope.

“*Rise!*”. Rise, walk, do not stay still. You have a task; you have a mission, and you must accomplish it as you journey. Do not remain seated: rise, get on your feet. And Abram set out on the journey. Walking, always. And the symbol of this is the tent. The Book of Genesis says that Abram went forth with a tent, and when he stopped there was the tent. Abram never built a house for himself because of this imperative: “Arise!”. However, he did build an altar: the main thing, to adore the One who commanded him to rise, to set out on the journey, with the tent. “Arise!”.

“*Look!*” was the second imperative. “Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward eastward and westward” (Gen 13:14). Look. Look at the horizon; do not build walls. Always look. And go forward. The mystical nature [the spirituality] of the horizon is that the farther forward you go, the farther away the horizon is. Push your gaze, push it ahead, walking, but toward the horizon.

The third imperative: “*Hope!*”. There is that beautiful dialogue: “[Lord,] thou has given me no

offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir” — “This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir” (cf. Gen 15:3-4). And this was said to a man who could not have descendants, both due to his age and to the barrenness of this wife. But he will be “by you”. And your descendants — by you — will be “as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted” (Gen 13:16). And a little farther on: Lift up your gaze, “look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able.... So shall your descendants be”. And Abraham believed, and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness (cf. Gen 15:5-6). In the faith of Abram began that justice that [the Apostle] Paul would develop in the explanation of justification.

“Rise! Look! — the horizon, no walls, the horizon — Hope!”; and hope is without walls; it is the pure horizon.

But when Abram was called, he was more or less our age: he was about to enter retirement, retirement to rest.... He started out at that age. An elderly man, with the burden of old age, that old age that brings aches and pains, illness.... But you, as though you were a young man, rise, go, go! As if you were a scout: go! Look and hope. This Word of God is also for us, who are of an age similar to that of Abram ... more or less — there are a few young men here, but most of us have reached this age: and the Lord says the same to us today: “Arise! Look! Hope!”. He tells us that it is not time to retire, not time to end our history, to recapitulate our history.

The Lord tells us that our history is still open: it is open until the end; it is open with a mission. And he indicates our mission with these three imperatives: “Rise! Look! Hope!”.

Someone who does not like us says that we are the gerontocracy of the Church. It is a slur. They do not understand what they are saying. We are not Gerontes: we are grandfathers; we are grandfathers. And if we do not feel this way, we must ask for the grace to feel it. Grandfathers to whom our grandchildren look. Grandfathers must give life meaning for them from our experience. Grandfathers not withdrawn in our melancholic history, but open to transmit this. And for us, this “rise, look, hope” is called “dreaming”. We are grandfathers called to dream and to give our dream to today’s young people: they need it. Because they will draw from our dreams the power to prophecy and carry out their task.

That passage from the Gospel of Luke (2:21-38) comes to mind. Simeon and Anna: two grandparents, but what a capacity to dream these two had! And they recounted this entire dream to Saint Joseph, to Our Lady, to the people.... And Anna went about chatting here and there, saying: “It is he! It is he!”, and she recounted the dream of her life. And this is what the Lord asks of us today: to be grandfathers. To transmit this vitality to young people, because young people are expecting it from us; not to withdraw, to give of our best: they are waiting for our experience, for our positive dreams so as to carry out the prophecy and the work.

I ask the Lord for all of us, that He grant us this grace. Also for those who have not yet become grandfathers: we see that the President [of the Bishops] of Brazil is a young man, ... but he will get there! The grace to be grandfathers, the grace to dream, and to pass on this dream to our young people: they need it.

[At the end of Mass, before the blessing]

I would like to thank everyone for the words that Cardinal Sodano, the Dean, addressed to me, with the new Vice-Dean who is next to him — congratulations! — to thank him for this common prayer on this anniversary, asking forgiveness for my sins and for perseverance in the faith, in hope, in charity. I thank you very much for this fraternal solidarity and I ask the Lord to bless you and accompany you on the path of service to the Church. Thank you very much.