

REFLECTION FOR AUGUST 15, 2009

I want to begin with a story, which might tell us much more than a theoretical reflection:

A poor man was one day begging from door to door in a village street, when suddenly there appeared in the middle of the village a golden coach of astounding beauty. The poor man guessed that it must belong to a king. He wondered who this king of kings might be. He felt sure that he would at least be ready to give a generous alms to a poor beggar. His heart raced as the coach stopped and the king descended and moved towards him. Imagine his horrors, when just as he was about to stretch out his hand, he realized that the king was stretching out to him and asking: "What is it that you are going to give me?" Utterly disappointed and bewildered, the beggar dug his hand into the bottom of the sack he was carrying, extricated a grain of corn and reluctantly gave it to the royal personage. However, when at the end of the day he emptied his sack in the ground, he found a little heap of corn and in its midst a grain of pure gold. Naturally, the poor man began to weep. "If only", he murmured, "if only I had the heart to give him everything I possessed." (R. Tagore)

We celebrated today the final vows of Sr. Ann Marie and Sr. Maria Goretti and we are on the eve of the celebration of the first vows of Sr. Karen Marie and Sr. Maria Clare. Doesn't this story refer very well to these two events? When we say "for one year" can that be compared with one grain of corn that we offer the Lord or do we already give everything we possess – as it should be? And in having professed perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience – did we give ourselves really for ever, without keeping some reserve in our heart? I am sure that you gave all that you have and all that you are. But don't forget, dear Sisters, we have to give every day again and again everything that we possess. Our vocation remains a daily call. Every day the Lord looks at us with love saying: "Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor. Then come and follow me." The "Fiat" to God, to our Sisters and to all who are entrusted to us, ultimately to the whole creation, has to be repeated every day.

“Responding to God’s call is a life-long process”, we read in Article 47 of our Constitutions and the Article closes: “In all stages of life, each with its difficulties and joys, we are to remain open to God’s continual call.” Keep your first love alive, dear Sisters. Love does not count, does not give with hesitation, asking whether I shall give one grain of corn or more or even all. Love gives always all.

I repeat: Keep your first love alive. The time will come when you may feel dry, when you may ask the Lord: “I have left everything. What do you give me?” Did I not give myself to the “most Rich, the most Powerful, the Most Nobel” – as Mother Pauline expressed it on her first vow day? Yes, he is the most Rich and time and again we experience that he is always greater than our heart, that he gives always more than we can imagine. God is always the first one who loves us, but he never interferes with our freedom to accept or reject his immense love. “I will espouse you to me forever,” says God in Hosea 2, 21. God’s love to us, dear Sisters, is strong and intense. It is best expressed in the image of the vine and the branches, an image that Mother Pauline loved very much. As the branch belongs to the vine, so do we belong to God. As the branch cannot bring fruit without the vine so are we nothing without God. You, dear Sisters, said and will say your “Yes” to this intimate love-relationship to God. You experienced God’s love and want to give him all of yourself. Our consecration is a message to the world that God loves each human being. The world needs the witness of our daily FIAT to God – as Mary did, so that Incarnation will become again and again a reality. Then the MAGNIFICAT will be the never-ending echo of our FIAT.

Mendham, August 15, 2009

Sr. Adalberto