

MARIAN MOVEMENT OF PRIESTS

-introduction-

Ave Maria

1 January 2021 Mary Holy Mother of God

Dear members of the Marian Movement of Priests,

For many months we have been living in a new and unexpected situation both because of health difficulties and especially by reason of the spiritual difficulties that we face. We began 2020 with the normal lovely and strong wish to live and spread the work of Our Mother by prayer in Cenacles, retreats and spiritual exercises. Nearly all the planned European Spring cenacles were postponed or cancelled, and in the rest of the world there have been equal difficulties, and besides, unfortunately, in many places, restrictions have been renewed after only a short time in which we could return and pray together in church.

With courage and determination, despite the difficulties and uncertainties, we held the International Spiritual Exercises for priests in Collevalenza from 20 to 27 June, with the presence of a bishop and 25 priests, some who came with difficulty from foreign countries. It was a real moment of grace. The absence of the traditional 150-200 participants was greatly felt, but it all took place in the same way and in strong spiritual union with all the members of the MMP across the world. This is very important: when we hold a cenacle, whether there are two or two hundred of us, we are never alone in prayer but really united with all the members of the MMP the world over. In fact, in the Act of Consecration to Her Immaculate Heart, Our Lady makes us speak in the plural: she wants us united and aware that every day we work and walk together with all the members of the MMP for the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart.

In the current difficulties for meeting and travel, the desire to be in a Cenacle using internet connections was born and has grown greatly. In this way, daily Cenacles have been formed among people who live very far apart, even in different countries. Very well, we have to make more cenacles possible! Thanks to God and to Our Lady for this growing desire to pray in Cenacles at national, or international levels or even among language groups: in this way also, we together help each other to walk with her. There are cenacles of priests, laity, young people and children, national, continental and wider cenacles. But even with the good can come the pitfall of the evil one, who wants to ruin everything: there may be a risk that you will get used to praying at home and no longer in church, where the Eucharist awaits us, or used above all to having remote cenacles instead of meeting in person... when possible one must always have cenacles "present together", they can be held over the internet only when we are really prevented from meeting by reason of distance or for health or other really serious reasons. So, it is important and necessary that these cenacles on the internet not replace our cenacles present together. These present-together cenacles come first: those on the internet are an added grace that we welcome with much gratitude to our heavenly Mother, and to those who organize them for her. The current difficulties cannot make us take a step back, but, if anything, forward. Do not reduce cenacles or change their form, if at all, add more.

I know that in some countries it has been possible to hold retreats in the form of a Cenacle for Priests and Laity: it is a grace for the participants and - I repeat - for the MMP and the Church, of which we are children and for which we live and pray. Despite the current difficulties, I had the grace of participating in numerous cenacles in Italy and abroad also, in Portugal, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and the United States of America.

The International Spiritual Exercises for priests in Collevalenza will be from 27 June to 3 July, 2021. We will mark the tenth anniversary of the departure for Heaven of dear Don Stefano Gobbi, which took place on June 29, 2011. We hope with all our heart that there will again be a full participation of priests from all over the world. I ask the laity to invite their priests to participate and, if necessary, to help them in some way. I am very pleased that in various parts of the world there are further Spiritual Exercises of the MMP: May those who just cannot participate in Collevalenza take part at least in the local Exercises, do not let pass this grace of the continuous Cenacle. Information for the Spiritual Exercises in Collevalenza can be requested from Fr. Florio Quercia, via del Ronco 12 (Jesuit Fathers), 34133 Trieste, Italy; e-mail: querciaflorio@tiscali.it; tel.: (+39) 333.6322248. Looking further ahead, the organization of the 2022 Spiritual Exercises in Fatima, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the birth of the MMP, has already begun: both the Exercises for priests and a Retreat for Laity roughly from 26 June to 3 July 2022. By autumn, a first registration will be required, in order to reserve accommodation for all.

Regional and national cenacles will be scheduled as soon as circumstances permit, while we continue and build up our small local and family cenacles.

I ask you to pray that the Cause of Beatification of Fr. Nazareno Lanciotti, although slowed down by present problems, may soon attain a good conclusion; As for the Cause of Beatification of Don Stefano Gobbi, I renew the request to send your testimonies as soon as possible, to be ready for presentation.

MARIAN MOVEMENT OF PRIESTS

-reflection-

Ave Maria

1 January 2021 Mary Holy Mother of God

Dear members of the Marian Movement of Priests,

Dear Fr. Stefano Gobbi explained to us one day: "On 8 May 1972, I was in Fatima in front of the chapel of apparitions, and there Our Lady showed me that we were entering the times that she had predicted in 1917, times of a great crisis for humanity and for the Church. She called it "a crisis of purification," and these times "times of the great tribulation." And the most exposed to danger, you know who they were? The sons she loves the most... her priests! Our Lady raised Her Marian Movement of Priests to call priests to consecrate themselves to Her Immaculate Heart, so, living consecrated and protected in it, they might help the whole Church to go through the period of trial until the triumph of the Immaculate Heart.

We always knew that this test would arrive, and we know the spiritual aspects of it, but not the details with which it would develop. In last year's circular letter, I proposed that you reflect on the Confusion and Purification already happening in the Church. *"The Lord is allowing to emerge in the Church doctrinal problems, hidden or dormant "spiritual illnesses", masks, plans aimed at changing the Church, at changing the life of the commandments, sacraments and virtues, so that through purification it will shine again with the light of holiness that the Immaculate restores to her, to the glory of the Holy Trinity. It is a process of healing the Church, a purification that is necessary"*.

Our Lady entrusts to our fidelity the path of this purification: the better we live the Consecration to Her Immaculate Heart, the sooner Her Triumph will be fulfilled, which coincides with the triumph of Jesus in hearts and souls, in the lives of individuals and nations (cf. 14 June 1979). Consecration to the Immaculate Heart helps us to live ever more rooted in the Church: in the Act of Consecration she makes us pray: *"Above all we wish to be united with the Holy Father and the hierarchy ... to set up a barrier to the growing confrontation against the Magisterium, that threatens the very foundation of the Church"*. Being a "barrier" is a fruit of the consecration, but also a task asked of MMP members. If the barrier is not strong and the foundations are struck, the responsibility lies not only with those who ought to defend them but also with the barrier itself, which is us. In 1979 Our Lady explained to us the four signs of the time of purification: Confusion, Lack of Discipline, Division, Persecution. They seek to strike at the members of the Church, to crumble the foundations of Christian life, so that they no longer rest on the rock that makes them firm, which is Christ. Sometimes one has the impression that this crumbling is already happening, and so then we must live our second commitment ever better: prayer for the Pope, who has the divine task of confirming us in the faith (cf. Lk 22:31-32) and to defend the Magisterium from multiple pushes towards changes contrary to the Gospel (cf. Jn 21, 15-17).

Sometimes we think that the threats that crumble the foundations are easily recognizable, but it is not always so. We are used to seeing difficulties only in their human aspect, but we must learn to read events, even the year 2020, in the light of what Our Lady tells us in her messages preserved in the Blue Book. She teaches us to live in the light of holiness of Her Immaculate Heart, She – a woman clothed in the sun – sheds light on us where heart and mind would remain in the dark, and teaches us to see the origin of all evils: it is evil itself, what she calls "my enemy", the devil. His goal is to take away our divine Grace, to get us used to doing without God. In every evil the enemy wants to blind us and prevent us from seeing the spiritual dangers that he hides, he wants us to become spiritually ill, to make us forget that our true medicine is the Lord Jesus. It is he, risen, who frees us from the enemy. It is only with him that every evil can be transformed into victory and grace, the Cross of Salvation, while without him is darkness.

In 2020 the sudden suffering of the new virus that affected the whole world presented itself, a great suffering for so many people, with so many deaths, so much loneliness, so many economic and social problems, restrictions in many aspects of daily life. These restrictions have also affected the possibility of freely living one's faith and freely receiving the sacraments. One of the images that will remain in history will be the sad one, in many places, of closed churches almost all the world over, including large shrines and holy places.

Let me tell you that we have lived much darkness throughout 2020... I do not dwell on the darkness of human suffering, but on spiritual darkness, which this year has manifested itself in various ways, for example:

- the darkness of the many closed churches, while markets were regularly frequented and open: so many people believed that churches – normally rather empty – were places dangerous to health, and gradually they got used to thinking that what one experiences in church (prayer and especially the Mass) is less important than daily shopping;

- the darkness and the emptiness that surrounds the Eucharist. Under the name of "prudence" it is long preferred to do without the Eucharist, the Lord Jesus in his redemptive sacrifice, as if the Saving Sacrament were not necessary for our eternal Salvation, indeed it seemed necessary to renounce it to save our earthly life, and spiritual communion is considered as more than sufficient. So, the darkness also of the spiritual life, into which many have fallen, has increased: for almost a year, too many remain distant from the sacraments and no longer feel need of them! Many think (wrongly) that the Church has taught that one can pray before the TV with no more need to go to Church for Mass and to receive Holy Communion.
- the darkness by which the Holy Mass has been demeaned, considered almost only an opportunity for encounter between people (therefore dangerous to health), saying that one can give up Holy Mass and the Eucharist since one will go again after the time of emergency ... but the Church celebrates the Holy Mass as a memorial of the Sacrifice of the Son of God, to receive Salvation from him, without the Eucharist there would be no hope for man on earth, abandoned without the Saviour. The Holy Mass has been severely humiliated when considered above all as a "human encounter" and therefore "an unnecessary item for man's wellbeing in a time of difficulty, a "disposable item", while it is "divine mystery of salvation" and therefore "an indispensable reality for the good of man to overcome difficulties, it is a supreme and necessary good.

This darkness is real and present, someone has unmasked and overcome it, but this darkness still tries to obscure the splendour of souls and to extinguish turn off the light of Grace. This darkness is an expression of the evil one and of the confusion he wants to sow in the Church. As Jesus taught, the enemy confuses by sowing the darnel, that is, things that are disguised as good but are empty and deceptive. The evil one, in fact, disguises himself, hides, makes us falsely believe what he proposes is good. But whoever retains the Holy Spirit notices it, is not confused and has the light to react.

Our Lady has left us a wonderful Act of Consecration, to be meditated deeply in every word. Towards the end she reminds us that the evil one acts (in fact we say, "Mindful that atheism... etc.") to carry out the worst desecration in history, entering "the Holy Temple of God, not sparing even many of our brother-priests". The objective of this desecration is the Eucharist and its ministers, the priests. Our Lady came specially to save priests, so that the Eucharist may continue to be the Sun of Salvation for humanity. If priests, for any, even apparently good, reason, should no longer publicly defend the need for the Eucharist but agree to set it aside, even momentarily, even if only "for a good end", this would be the sign that this desecration is taking a step forward. But what "good end" could ever be greater than the Summit of Love that is the Eucharist? In 2020 there was, at times, this difficulty of judgment, of discernment... No one, in fact, has experienced all these things as "contrary acts" towards the Sacraments and Holy Mass, if anything he accepted them and supported them as "necessary acts in exceptional circumstances". Everything was done for good. Everything has the appearance of goodness, as the darnel appears to be good but is empty and deceitful.

Our Lady, spouse of the Holy Spirit, speaks to us with the Divine Light and gives us the Wisdom that is Christ the Saviour. Only in this way can we make a painstaking and subtle discernment.

When one comes to believe that there is a "good end", an act of charity more "useful", or more necessary to a man of the Eucharist, or if charity is reduced to earthly life alone and does not also include the life of Grace, if - for example - it is thought that it is charity to suspend the sacraments without seeking, by all means, to guarantee them to the faithful, and if instead it is thought that it is not charity to keep seeking these means, then one is faced with charity being undermined, reduced to a generous love of great feelings, which may even seem evangelical, but is only earthly, useful for earthly life but without hope. This leads to a "purely temporal messianism" (cf. *Card. J. Ratzinger, Instruction on certain aspects of liberation theology, 2004*): man proposes his own way of salvation instead of that of Christ... And so, the Eucharist is struck "without too much pain"!

Our Lady warned us in her message of 31 December 1992, using very strong words that recall the Prophet Daniel. *"The Sacrifice of the Mass renews that which was accomplished by Jesus on Calvary. By accepting Protestant doctrine, people will hold that the Mass is not a sacrifice, but only a sacred meal, that is to say, a remembrance of what Jesus did at his Last Supper. And thus, the celebration of Holy Mass will be suppressed. In this abolition of the daily Sacrifice consists the horrible sacrilege accomplished by the Antichrist"* (485 u, December 31, 1992). Now, in this message she affirms that the Holy Mass will be as "demoted" from the divine level to the human level. We do not know in detail how this will happen. The Church has a very clear and wonderful doctrine about the Eucharist. But many no longer think of Holy Mass as Jesus' Sacrifice on Calvary, but as the Sunday meeting to celebrate faith in community. This year there has been a kind of down-playing, because Mass has been treated as an unnecessary and non-essential human encounter instead of as "an encounter with our Divine Saviour". The doctrine is wonderful, the practice is very different... This is already part of the desecration and of the horrible sacrilege of which Our Lady speaks.

At the moment, there is more talk of protecting physical health than eternal health, endangered by sin. I do not want to deny the importance of the care for life, but now often in churches we look for sanitisers but do not look for the confessor. Our Lady reminds us that the reality of sin is so serious, that the Son of God had to establish in the Church the memorial of His redemptive Sacrifice, in order to perpetuate His act of reparation and redemption. *"To the general and renewed rejection of God, the answer is still that of his renewed and sorrowful prayer, with its infinite capacity for reparation: If sin and evil are overflowing, today there is offered anew to the divine justice the innocent blood of the true Lamb of God, who takes away all the sins of the world."* (281 h, i 1 January 1984).

It almost seems that it has been said "we are in danger and therefore we must renounce the Eucharist", while until recently the example of the Holy Martyrs was exalted, who said "we are in danger, but we cannot renounce the Eucharist" (cf. the Martyrs of Abitinae; Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, part two). If its primacy is not recognized, the very Paschal Mystery and the lordship of Christ are also debased. Our Lady, in fact, tells us, *"His Sacrifice has an infinite value, transcending time. His Blood, his wounds, his painful agony, his atrocious death upon the Cross possess the value of salvation even for this generation of yours, which without him would have gone to perdition. His Sacrifice is mystically consummated in every Holy Mass which is celebrated."* (281 f, g. 1 January 1984)

"The glorious reign of Christ will coincide with the triumph of the Eucharistic reign of Jesus, because in a purified and sanctified world, completely renewed by love, Jesus will be made manifest, above all, in the mystery of his Eucharistic presence. The Eucharist will be the source from which will burst forth all his divine power, and it will become the new sun, which will shed its bright rays in hearts and souls and then in the life of individuals, families and nations, making of all one single flock, docile and meek, whose sole shepherd will be Jesus. "Your heavenly Mother is leading you on toward these new heavens and this new earth, the Mother who is gathering you today from every part of the world, to prepare you to receive the Lord who is coming". (505, i, j, k. November 21, 1993)

Without the celebration of the Eucharist, the Christian is deprived of the treasure of redemption, and priests are emptied of their identity and their first ministry: to be servants of the Eucharist, servants of the sacrament that generates and sanctifies the Church and nourishes her to be herself in turn, in every Christian nourished and sanctified by the Eucharist, an offering of salvation for humanity.

"The Sacrifice of Holy Mass must be lived interiorly by you, in your life and at the moment of its celebration. It is above all at the altar that each of you comes to be like Jesus crucified." (148 n. 11 February 1978). *"You are being called more and more to become the apostles and new martyrs of Jesus present in the Eucharist. And so, you must increase your reparation, your adoration and your life of piety. The Eucharistic Heart of Jesus will work great things in each of you."* (156, n, o, p. July 13, 1978)

"I myself will fill up the great void about my Son Jesus, present in the Eucharist. I will form a barrier of love about his divine presence." (176, n. June 14, 1979)

We greatly need to look to Jesus the Redeemer and our Heavenly Mother to face this test of fidelity. It is a time of great discernment and choice. Each of us, priests or bishops, lay or religious, has always wanted to live every day of 2020 in fidelity to the Lord. But discernment is conditioned by spiritual malaise, by confusion, and so, how many times in 2020 we could not understand where the real good was... how many times, in doubt, we have chosen the earthly good hoping that it would coincide with the love that God expects of us. Let us think of the Passion and Death of Jesus: during the trial, the condemnation, the physical elimination, the Apostles and the disciples had considered it right and proper to save their own lives, but... Jesus had been abandoned... They loved him, they were genuinely sorry for Him, but in fact they put him aside, they could not understand what was happening, to discern what was right to do at that moment, how to remain faithful. This was also part of the hour of darkness that Jesus had spoken about. Only those who were with Our Lady remained with Jesus below the cross. The very people who were with her were the first to go to the empty tomb of the risen one: first the devout women (with the apparition of Jesus to The Magdalene) and then St. John, together with St. Peter (who received the grace to run to the tomb although he had denied Jesus, because even if we deny Him, he remains faithful, and in His mercy confirms the Grace to the repentant heart).

Only by the maternal work of Our Lady does one remain faithful, whether we realize it or not. *"Your Heavenly Mother wants to enfold each one of you in the secure refuge of her Immaculate Heart, to protect you in the time of the great trial and to prepare you to receive Jesus, who is about to return to establish his glorious reign among you."* (505 b. November 21, 1993)

"I am the Mother of the Second Advent and the door which is being opened on the new era. This new era will coincide with the greatest triumph of the Eucharistic reign of Jesus." (443 u. February 26, 1991)... Looking at

this past year, however, the Eucharist did not publicly triumph, indeed it was humiliated. No one wanted to do this deliberately, but spiritual and sometimes even pastoral choices have perhaps brought this about.

Throughout all this "Eucharistic famine", there have nevertheless been moments of true triumph: e.g., those people – often of advanced age – who visited the Eucharistic Jesus in the church every day, despite the difficulties, looking for open churches, because they could not help but come to pray before him and ask to receive Communion... The sixth station of the Way of the Cross was being repeated: Veronica who courageously goes to console Jesus, left on his own by everyone (except his Mother and a few others with her), and He is very consoled by this faithful and courageous love. Or I think of many priests who sought all means to provide the Eucharist to the faithful.

It is true, during the last year it seemed to me like seeing again many scenes of the Passion of the Lord, which in itself already has the irrevocable triumph of the Resurrection and of the Immaculate Heart of our Mother. It is evident how consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary - if lived! - defends us from this darkness by making us a ray of Her Immaculate Light (cf. 6 August 1986, 24 July 1987, 15 November 1990).

Even in the darkness of this time, the first rays of the triumph of Her Immaculate Light shine beautifully.

Let us remember then the words of Our Lady:

"Entrust yourselves to me with confidence, and you will remain faithful, because I will be able to carry out fully my work as Mediatrix of Graces. I will take you each day along the way of my Son, in such a way that He may increase in you to his fullness. This is my great work, which I am still carrying out in silence and in the desert. Under my powerful action as Mediatrix of Graces, you are evermore transformed into Christ, that you may become fit for the task which awaits you. Forward then, with courage, along the way traced out by your Heavenly Mother." (204 o, p. July 16, 1980)

"Allow your heavenly Mother to gather you into the sheepfold of her Immaculate Heart to form you to be ever more faithful to Jesus and his Gospel. Be humble, strong, courageous. Do not allow yourselves to be seized either by fear or by discouragement.

The night of error, of apostasy and of infidelity has already descended upon the world and into the Church.

The Mystical Body of Jesus is living through the hour of a new painful agony. For this reason, there are repeated again today, in a much greater way, the same things that were done at that time: the abandonment, the denial, the betrayal. You, O little sons formed in the Immaculate Heart of your heavenly Mother, must, like the Apostle John, keep watch in prayer and in trust." (308, h, i, j. April 4, 1985)

We are called to be Her rays of light, a great vocation to be received with humility. Each one of us must grasp whether due to the new situations of 2020 has made mistakes or has not responded to what Our Lady has taught us: it must be corrected. We must respond ONLY as Our Lady teaches us, with spiritual weapons, with the three commitments. Our Leader makes us fight like this, we do not need to look for other ways, as if what she teaches us is not enough. She knows what she says, she is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit!

But how willing are we to fight? How willing are we to "expose ourselves", to witness with love as Our Lady asks us? Let us ask the Holy Spirit for help. "Come, Holy Spirit...". Our fight is that of the "little ones": it is waged in prayer, in Cenacles, in fidelity... let us seek to offer our fight, despite our limitations, as a consolation and reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Let us ask for the grace to be apostles of the Cenacles, to promote and spread them, even if with only two or three people (cf. 17 January 1974). I ask you for great fidelity and unity in the way you carry out the Cenacle. I know that many of you guide beautiful cenacles and there are different customs in different countries, but it is better to be united also in form: for this reason, I ask you to please follow the schema for a cenacle that you will find on the official website of the MMP, www.msm-mmp.org, now translated into six languages.

The Holy Father is entrusting us to the protection of Saint Joseph through this Jubilee Year dedicated to him. Our Lady speaks of him to us with great sweetness and admiration (19 March 1984 and 1996): let us avail ourselves of his fatherhood, of his very particular and chaste union with the Immaculate Heart of Mary and of the protection that he will give to the Church in this so important a year.

I thank you very much for your prayers, they are a great comfort to me, I assure you of mine each day. I am always happy to receive news from your cenacles all over the world. *"With the strength of the little ones..."* (September 8, 1996)

Let us walk together in the light and in the Grace that issue for us from the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

don Luca Pescatori

Priests Retreat / Spiritual exercises in Collevaenza: from 27 June to 3 July 2021, we will also mark the tenth anniversary of the departure for Heaven of Don Stefano Gobbi. Information c/o Fr. Quercia, (+39) 333.6322248 **2022, fiftieth anniversary of the Marian Movement of Priests;** Spiritual Exercises in Fatima, for priests from 26 June to 2 July, and for Laity from 30 June to 3 July, enrolment from autumn 2021; www.msm-mmp.org.