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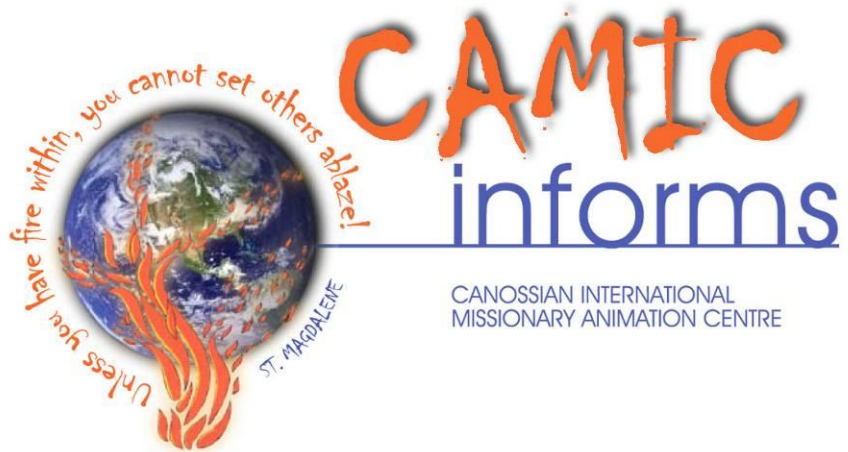
It is a monthly publication, aiming to pass on information about the missions and between the Canossian Missionary Centre and the Provinces.

We invite the Canossian Sisters to collaborate in sharing news and information about their missionary activities.

We would like to receive the said news not later than the 20th of each month at the address below. Thank you!

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CANOSSIAN INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONARY ANIMATION CENTRE

**missionary
church
events**



8th MAY 2016

THIS IS OUR FAMILY FEAST!

"...let us stir up" our hearts, let us listen once again to the words of our Mother, which are filled with goodness, compassion and mercy:

... you see that, ... knowing that certain little things are due more to our weakness than to our will, sure of your heart and your desire to please me in everything, I agree with you to act in freedom in everything that you decide, thus be in peace (to G. Terragnoli)

... I recommend to you very much, my dear daughter, ... as much with yourself as with others, use as much cordiality and gentleness as possible (to G. Terragnoli)

... I invite all of you, no one excluded, to revive your attention about ... your kind, gentle and meek ways while dealing with and speaking to each other (to A. Bragato)

... I recommend you, my dear daughter, to take care of your health and avoid doing too much, if you want to work for the divine service and succeed in the task of converting the world (to E. Renzi)

... take care of yourself, without worrying about expense, since I consider your health is more important than mine (to F. M. Ghezzi)

May St. Magdalene, our Mother, help us to walk in her footsteps.

BEST WISHES!

INFORMATION

IMPORTANT DATES, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

03.05.2016 World Press Freedom Day - The General Assembly of the UN declared on **3rd May the World Press Freedom Day**, in order to point out the importance of freedom of the press and to remind governments of their duty to respect Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to celebrate the anniversary of the declaration of Windhoek regarding the principles of free press, **enacted by African journalists in 1991.**

UNESCO remembers the World Press Freedom Day **by awarding a prize UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize** to people, organizations or institutions which have given an evident contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom throughout the world, especially when it is threatened. **Created in 1997**, the prize is assigned by an independent jury of 14 professional reporters and by the member states of UNESCO.

The name of the prize is in honour of **Guillermo Cano Isaza**, a Columbian reporter who was killed in front of the offices of his newspaper on **17th December 1986.**

03.05. World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day – The objective of this day and of the manifestations in public Squares, is that of drawing people to the Red Cross movement and making known the tasks carried out by its Volunteers. During this day, simulations of first aid (e.g. what to do in a situation of Emergency before the arrival of the ambulance) and campaign activities are explained at national and international level.

The anniversary is celebrated on the day of **Henry Dunant's** birth, considered the **founder of the Association.**

Francesco Rocca, the extraordinary Commissioner CRI says, *“This is the day of the volunteers, the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, a day during which, throughout the world, 98 million people, 150 thousand in Italy, in the emblem of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, tell the whole world that the Seven Principles on which the organization is based are still valid. We need to remember, today, those of us who throughout the world are committed in situations of crises and war, I think of Syria, but also those who continue to assist populations whose sufferings are forgotten by public opinion.”*

25.05. International Missing Children's Day – The International Missing Children's Day has been celebrated on 25th May every year, from 1983, the first year in which it was celebrated. This day was inaugurated in order to remember the disappearance of little Ethan Patz, kidnapped in New York on 25th May 1979 and to awaken public opinion regarding this phenomenon by launching messages of solidarity and hope to the parents who no longer have any news about their children.

It is celebrated in conjunction with the Global Network for Missing Children – a programme of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) – whose aim is to arouse awareness about missing children since this is a phenomenon that affects every country in the world: according to recent estimates, **at least 8 million children disappear every year, this means 22,000 children every day.**

And yet, many countries do not consider this phenomenon to be a priority and do not set up adequate structures to ensure their return home. The celebration of this International Day involves all public security forces and NGOs from different countries, **among these Italy has Telefono Azzurro**, and they organise every year events and conventions to arouse public opinion concerning the need to **develop new and more efficacious forms of collaboration and coordination to protect children and avoid their disappearance and kidnapping.**

28.05 World Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Day – The World Day for MS is celebrated on **28th May** and it is promoted by the **MS International Federation (MSIF)** is the only global campaign to raise awareness about MS. The campaign for the MS World Day aims at launching four key messages to enhance awareness and general knowledge about MS:

- 1) The cause of MS is unknown and neither is there a definitive cure.**
- 2) MS is usually diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40 and persists for the whole of one's life.**
- 3) The symptoms of MS vary from person to person. This makes life unpredictable for these people.**
- 4) Assistance and treatment are gradually improving for those with MS but not for everyone and not in equally.**



Charism Corner

Re-expressing my charism today

(Continuation)

Today we are very afraid of any kind of norm or directive which may, in some way, condition our lives. We are afraid that someone may restrict our freedom to the point that we ourselves fear to make choices, more or less binding, so that we may not feel conditioned by them. We are confused by many truths which are left to the debatable choices of people and considered as consumer goods that are valued as long as the market requires them (e.g. **One cannot frustrate a person:** can one **remove** a person from an activity **where he/she wants to remain**? What place does obedience have in our lives? Think of the right of holydays or a day off ...).

Often we lack an exact point of reference, at least in some choices.

We do not have a **truth** which does not change according to fashion, a **model of reference** which does not change proposals of life, like a fashion model changes her dress ...

The incontestable truth for us is the Gospel and the valid model is always Christ. But, today, how can we interpret the Gospel in the light of this new mentality, how can we live it as believers, especially for us **as prophetic witnesses in our religious life**? In what way can we be a sign for others so that they, too, may live in their families, work place and leisure time? (e.g. In a group of families who are separated or divorced, how far do rules apply and how much room is there for the Lord's mercy and for an experience of faith?)

When one feels lost in a great city, one seeks a reference point, some kind of indication or sign that helps one find the right direction.


The **Rule of Life** has this aim: to help us find the right direction, amid the impervious paths of life. And even here, **which rule when these continually change?** How can we feel reassured and guided by a rule that is challenged by today's mentality? How can we interpret and live the same rule in a different culture?

Magdalene discovers the **source of inspiration of the Rule in Christ Crucified** and in the Word of God that presents also an experiential method. We can understand that the root of the problem is not the **"norm"** or **"rule"** to choose, but to find the right modality so that in any situation we can find the source of inspiration that helps us to make a choice and makes us understand the meaning and the reason of a norm, according to the Spirit we have received as a gift.

The experience of **"Inspice et fac secundum exemplar..."** was, for Magdalene, an intense and overwhelming moment, but certainly only the beginning of a journey in the following of Christ whose love strongly attracted her. Even if she was interiorly motivated, **the following of Christ Crucified demanded an exacting journey** that required much time for spiritual and charismatic maturation.

After fifteen years, while in the meantime she had become the **Foundress**, she repeated this mystical experience - **"six or seven months before going to Venice to start this Foundation"**, **Magdalene** was able to indicate to us not only the pole of attraction of her spirituality, **Christ Crucified**, but also to **show us the way** to be disciples and set out a method that brings us to assimilate the **"Model"** she had contemplated of the mount:

"... I believe that it was then that I looked to the virtues of Christ Crucified for inspiration to write the Rules of the Daughters of Charity, that is, of the Institute."



*"The Spirit
of my Institute,
has for its foundation
charity alone,
and it does not want,
or rather,
I do not want
to have any other Spirit
than sweetness
and Charity."*

(To Marquis Alessandro Carloti)



Which are these **“virtues of the Crucified One”** that form the first **inspirational nucleus** of her Rule and that should become the virtues of the Institute?

Defining these virtues means identifying the path that Magdalene proposes to us so that we may live appropriately the charism of our Institute.

Thus, it is enough to open the Rule that Magdalene wrote for her **“Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor”** and simply observe the titles of the first five chapters and we will clearly

see which are the virtues she proposes to us.

- 1- Charity towards God**
- 2- Obedience**
- 3- Humility**
- 4- Poverty**
- 5- Charity towards Neighbour**

She, herself, explains the formulation of the first part of the Rule in the Preface:

“... in order to render it easier and clearer for you to carry out the great and global objective contemplated in the Institute, that is, the fulfilment of the two great Precepts of Charity according to the Spirit and imitation of Jesus Christ Crucified. The first of these virtues was His most ardent love for His Divine Father for whose glory He consumed the great Sacrifice. Therefore you will find that the first of your Rules will be those judged necessary to give you the means kindling within yourselves Holy Charity towards God. Hence, the Rules which follow are concerned with other virtues especially practiced and recommended by Him. It is intended only to give some principles, as Holy Charity in substance includes not only the fulfilment and fullness of the Law but also the Life and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ and all His teachings.”

The Foundress clearly demonstrates with this scheme that **charity** is the **virtue par excellence revealed by Christ on the cross**. It is identified as the **Charity of the Servant**, lived by Christ by means of the radical human experience of the cross and expressed in the virtues this sacrifice of self, comprises.

These virtues are **obedience, humility and poverty**, virtues which characterise and **define the identity of the servant**. Without these characteristics love remains generic and does not allow **the identity of the Canossian charism to emerge: the great, generous and universal love of the Son** that passes through a love that is humble, poor, obedient, gratuitous and hidden, typical of the Servant. **This means the spirituality that for so many years we have seen in Magdalene as “Charity in humility and humility in Charity.”**

In the “events of life” God reveals to us our identity as Daughters/Sons and Servants.

- 1. From being a Noble Lady to a Servant**
- 2. The history of the foundation of the first house in Venice**
- 3. The history of the male Institute**
- 4. Bakhita’s story.**

However, we should ask ourselves: is there perhaps some difficulty in accepting that our charism is expressed through modalities and virtues that seem often to mortify the human personality?

Definitively They are virtues which require self-sacrifice and a capacity of renunciation.

We are aware of **how difficult it is to live our charism if we do not know how to remain beneath the Cross as Mary did**. Here we realize how the method indicated by **Magdalene: “inspice et fac”** becomes decisive. It is not enough to have understood it at a rational level. And the difficulty does not come only from us, from our pride or simply from our need to express our personality with the fear of mortifying it.

A great obstacle comes from the mentality of an activist world, a careerist world, which obsessively protects itself in safeguarding its own rights, afraid of any physical and moral suffering, hostile to any form of renunciation but, above all, obsessed by the fear of psychological imbalance and **plagued by the need for personal and social affirmation.**

All this makes us understand more clearly that effort in the psychological field and will-power **will never** mature in us **the Canossian charism**. **It is necessary** to immerse ourselves at a deeper level of our per-

sonality, **we must know** how to encounter the “God alone” who is able to love without fear of sacrificing his Son, **we need to know** how to enter into a logic of faith that can find no justification at a human level.

We certainly need to make a **pilgrimage in faith** guided by the **Word of God**. (We can remember the various ways of travelling or preparing for a journey of different people: **a tourist or an opportunist**, just like a trader, makes sure he has all he needs when travelling, **a nomad** must insert himself in another world but often conserves his own, **the emigrant and the pilgrim** must establish dialogue with a different world and learn to adapt, ...). **There is a journey** that immerses us in different worlds and forces us to change mentality. **There is a journey** that must bring about a change in us, conversion, which opens us with all those we may meet and **this is a journey to make with and in the Word of God** that accompanies us in our world.

An example of **Magdalene’s method** is her **way of applying this charism of love-service in the community**.

When Magdalene asks herself which “*spirit*” should animate an aspect or a dimension of the life of the Institute, she can but find one single objective: discover the spirit of **Christ Crucified**. He is the “*source*” of inspiration of the **charism**. Magdalene deduces from “*inspice et fac*” every aspect of her life; the method is always the same, but her reflection brings her new and creative proposals.

Regarding **community life**, Magdalene discovered a modality with which to translate the spirit of love of the Crucified One in the words “***we must love one another as He loved us***” (Jn 13 and 15) that is, to the very end, to the point of giving our lives in community, to the point of becoming servants.

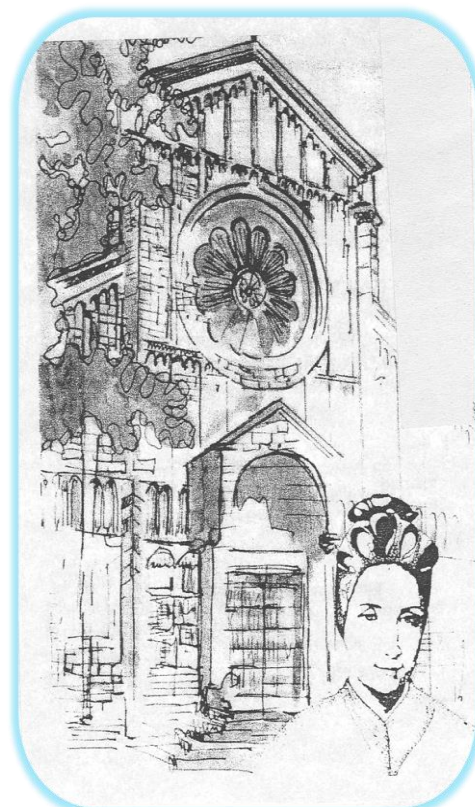
☐ **Magdalene** takes this inspiring principle from the Gospel and examines the “*moment*” in which this commandment was given to us; it was given **at the last supper by Jesus** to his disciples. The **Eucharist** is the moment that makes us understand the meaning of our living together and the community springs from the Eucharist. The gospel passages of the “***Vine and the branches***” and the “***Washing of the feet***” help us to discover the richness of the “*moment*” in which Christ asks us to “***love as He has loved us***”, as a **Son** and a **Servant**.

☐ **Then Magdalene** examines the “*way*” in which Christ loved us and this is for her like a love that “***reconciles***” which is defined as a “***universal***” love and a “***forgiving***” love. In her understanding of the **Crucified Love**, for Magdalene **reconciliation is the starting point of community living**. In the most common vision of community life, one prefers to present its positive side as a place of welcoming, of family life where people can grow and carry out the apostolate together. In this vision reconciliation is usually relegated to an event of fault or sin, which is frequent. It seems almost like a spare wheel for community living.

In the vision of the Canossian Charism **community springs from reconciliation and is the starting point** for building together a new community which loves as Christ loved. We are not a perfect community **that can sin now and again, we are a community of sinners** who seek, through reconciliation, a way that helps us to love one another as Jesus loved us. (Cf. Fraternal life in community, n. 26).

This vision makes the consecrated person, who enters a community, change completely his/her way of perceiving community life. **He/she cannot think of entering a perfect community which is ready to welcome him/her with great availability, to understand immediately all his/her problems and present him/her with every kind of comfort**. We are not entering a comfortable nest of a family which is already established in advance prepared to welcome me.

We are a community of sinners that gathers together with the aim of living mercy and forgiveness and, through maturation and sacrifice, and able to create relationships and dialogue which may guide us to sharing and communion.





Mission and evangelization – today!

A Reflection by Enzo Bianchi

I. Christianity as a journey of faith

The beginning of evangelization, carried out by Christ Himself, is narrated to us by Mark who summarizes the content in two warnings: **«The time has come and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good news.»** (Mk 1:15) The call to conversion and assent to the Gospel, that is faith in Jesus Christ, sent by God, this is the content of evangelization.

Thus, today, **renewing evangelization** means, above all, re-affirming **the primacy of faith** throughout the Christian world and this must be done with extreme clarity. We live in a world more and more secularized and yet, strangely, permeated by a **“religious atmosphere”**, by a **restlessness, a religious aspiration which is widespread and fragile** and often seems more superficial than profound.

For this reason, a real business has started up with enticing offers from various religious experiences, through which it is possible to take advantage of a **«menu of religions»**. But we cannot deceive ourselves: **this attraction to religious experience is no longer favourable to Christianity than what secularization can be.**

This is a sort of religious tendency that **flees from taking responsibility in human history, a personal relationship with God, communion in believing in one God who is Father.** This is why it is necessary to affirm that Christianity is faith, personal adhesion to the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who was revealed and explained to us by Jesus, his Son and Messiah.

We must be vigilant. In a world in which a **“religious sense”** seems to have returned («Yes to religion; no

to Christ and God!» in the words of J. B. Metz), in a world where **a feeling of the beyond, the sacred**, seems to have come back, it is necessary more than ever to re-affirm, at the risk of hurting common feeling, the need to **«start again from God»**, as Cardinal C. M. Martini once said, or to **restore the primacy to faith**, as we of the community of Bose have been saying for the last ten years. It is necessary to find once again the **root of our faith** as an experience of the invisible but living God.

«What must we do if we are to do the works that God wants?» asked some of Jesus’ questioners and He replied so clearly, **«This is working for God: you must believe in the one he has sent.»** (Jn 6:28-29) But keeping alive the primacy of faith in the world today means, above all, **not accepting the superficial interpretation of Christianity** as moral behaviour and be vigilant so that such a reduction does not take place.

Certainly, Christianity requires ethics, the evangelical ethics taught by Jesus and grounded on the ethics of the Old Testament contained in the Law and the Prophets. But this must be seen and understood



as a manifestation of faith: the works of a Christian are always **works of faith**, since they are aroused, **motivated, founded on, inspired and evaluated by one's adhesion to the living Lord.**

For this reason, in a time in which Christians can be appreciated as a **«Church that serves society»**, without arrogance and mistrust but aware of the treasure that they unworthily carry in earthen vessels (cf. 2 Co 4:7), they **must be on guard so that Christianity may not be reduced to philanthropy, ethics or, worse still, a monotheism of values** on which civil society can rely for its unity and its good organization.

If society says that **«the Church serves»** and the Church affirms: **«Society is in need of us»**, then the temptation of making an alliance strongly emerges and **the Church is no longer faithful to the mission which was entrusted to it by the Lord.** Cardinal Danneels, in one of his Pastoral Letters, wrote: **«It can be that those who accuse Christians of today that they lack witnessing to their values and perhaps those who accuse them continually making moral exhortations, are not wrong ... Yes, over the last few years, Christianity has been reduced to a system of ethics and many people are tired of this obstinate moralism.»**

A Church that presents itself as a **«simple ethical guardian»** (A. Dupont) is a Church which is destined to secularization, a Church that has lost its own gospel values and reveals itself unable to give answers to **«questions that seek meaning»**, characteristic of the **grave spiritual crisis** of today. Christian religious experience does not correspond only to a commitment in the world but access to a personal relationship with Christ, thanks to the revelation of God contained in Holy Scripture. A living and true God is **not** «the symbolic equivalent of an altruistic relationship.»

II. Do not be silent about the eschatological realities

There is no doubt that Jesus' teaching always kept present eschatological realities. It is also true that today's preaching, catechesis and the presentation of Christianity, often waters down this eschatological vision. People say that the Church, present in history, is **«a foreigner and a pilgrim»** moving towards one single homeland, the heavenly Kingdom of God and eternal life. But really, in the concrete life of the Church everything is determined by good things, but which must be **«visible»** and often this does not coincide with those **«invisible which are eternal.»** (2Cor 4:18).

This lack of **eschatological memory** has caused a certain ecclesial silence on the *last realities*: without this vision, death and the afterlife become fearful arguments which we are tempted to ignore or about which we do not know what to say.

And yet these questions about the afterlife, about the possibility of another life, are unavoidable. Even if people today try to tone down, hide or remove this uneasiness, and, blinded by the dominant craze for technology, they really cannot avoid this question even in circles which are **openly indifferent to religion.**

It is here that as Christians we must show a clear conscience and **be ready to answer those who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have** (cf. 1Pt 3:15), **show that we have faith in Christ, not only in this life otherwise we should be the most unfortunate of all people** (cf. 1Co 15:19). **A Christian believes in Christ who has risen from the dead and has conquered death for all of us and forever.**

The proclamation of salvation must indicate the definitive coming of the Kingdom, eternal life, which is life in God forever, the end of sin and evil and the eternal banquet!

People ask us Christians to **justify our faith**, especially about the question of eternal life by **demonstrating to them our experience of faithfulness regarding God's promises.**

Only if we are truly waiting for the Lord and desire eternal life, they may **question us about our hope and open themselves to the promised gift of God: faith.**

Christ is our hope (cf. 1Tm 1:1) and this formula of faith **«is the strength of our life»**, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, and for the sake of Christ we must show that we know how to die, convinced that dying for him we will always be with him in eternal life (cf. Ph :21-23; 1Ts 4:13-18). **Yes, because only the one who has a reason for dying, also has a reason for living!** Is it by chance that the last book of Von Balthasar, one of the greatest theologians of our time, has as a title ***Sperare per tutti?***

We believe in eternal life and for this reason we proclaim it.

La vita della Chiesa e la stessa società hanno bisogno di persone capaci di dedicarsi totalmente a Dio e agli altri per amore di Dio.



III. Proclaiming mercy

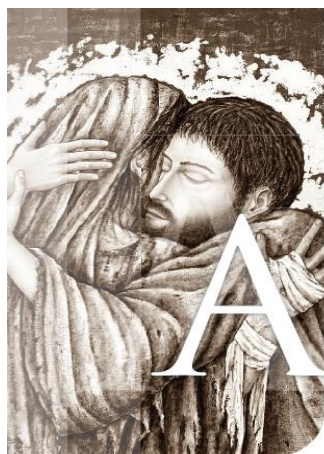
Proclaiming salvation in Christ – that is, the total salvation which is definitive and complete, eternal life of the Kingdom, life in God forever – does not mean forgetting the proclamation of salvation brought to us by the Gospel, by Christ the Lord, **here and now**, during our journey of life.

We must question ourselves: which experience of **mercy, and therefore of salvation**, has been given to us **here and now**, and which redemption can I proclaim through our evangelization of people while I am still alive and I am still on earth?

In fact, today people can acknowledge redemption only in a fragmentary and incomplete way, but, **«possessing the first fruits of the Spirit»** (Rm 8:23), can experience the mercy of God and be reconciled with Him.

Evangelization consists in preaching the **conversion and the remission of sin** for all men (cf. Lk 24:47); and in sending the Spirit to his disciples, the promise of the Risen Lord is **«For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven.»** (Jn 20:23)

In the institution of the Eucharist the accent falls on the blood poured out for many **«for the forgiveness of sins»** (Mt 26:28), because the One who con-signed Himself into the hands of sinners is the Son of Man who came into this world with **«the authority to forgive sins.»** (Mk 2:10) For us, **«knowledge of salvation»**, understood as an experience of redemption, is within the great mercy of God and therefore in the **remission of sins** (Lk 1:77), and Paul



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calls this saving event **«reconciliation with God»** (cf. 2Co 5:17-20), **action carried out by God Himself while man was still a sinner and an enemy.** (cf. Rm 5:6-10)

A Christian, therefore, becomes «a new creature» and can always return to the sanctifying mystery of baptism **through this experience of mercy and forgiveness** which frees him from sin and the power of evil.

I believe that **the remission of sins should be the main part of evangelization and**, if it is true that today there is no longer a sense of sin, it is also because **remission of sins**, which is the great gift of mercy from God, was not offered enough by people **to be experienced.**

In order to seek the Lord, to discern where to encounter Him, to follow Him everywhere He may go, **it is necessary that someone must define Him as the Lamb** who carries and blots out the sin of the world (cf. Jn 1:29.35-42), otherwise one only follows a teacher, a prophet, but not **the Saviour**, the Son of Man and the Son of God. (cf. Lk 5:1-11)

If evangelization is witnessing to the paschal event, the Risen Lord's victory over death, then the remission of sins is the most efficacious and possible narration of such a victory, and present today in our daily lives.

(to be continued)