

Message from Father Pergini:

August 29, 2021

“How much I must criticize you, my Church, and yet how much I love you! You have made me suffer more than anyone, and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed, and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal, and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, falser, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous, or more beautiful. “Countless times I have felt like leaving you, my Church; and yet every night I have prayed that I might die in your arms, loving arms.” (Carlo Carretto)

Who is Carlo Carretto? He was an Italian religious and a very charismatic author and founder of the catholic congregation of the little brothers of the Gospel. Frequently, I have read this quote from Carlo Carretto and paused for a moment. As a priest I very often hear complaints from people who naturally wonder what is going on within our church and outside our church. They become discouraged and are ready to leave our church. It is true their complaints fit perfectly in our time just as they did back when Carlo Carretto vented his outrage. His every word has a powerful authenticity that we can easily identify with.

On the other hand, I know many faithful people who patiently suffer without expressing their frustrations, their anger, and their many disappointments in our Church. They humbly, prayerfully, and peacefully lift up their anger, their confusion, and their outrage, to God before the Blessed Sacrament, with a suffering silence before Christ Jesus on the cross, who is the Lamb led to the slaughter.

The last words of Saint Mark's gospel in today's Sunday Mass, remind all of us that evils in the world come from within, and they can defile us. Yes, indeed, lots of us can entertain those evil thoughts and, unfortunately, they can become evil actions. These thoughts can poison our souls and lead us, and others too, down a path without an exit, a life without being embraced by the power of Christ's Mercy. To gain the whole world, and lose our souls, is the ultimate tragedy.

The second reading of Saint James' letter peacefully begs all of us today with his wise words: “Humbly welcome the Word that has been planted in you and is able to save your soul.” Indeed, the Word is planted in all of us at our baptism. As we honestly confess our sins of thought and actions during the sacrament of confession, the grace of this powerful sacrament cleanses us, and prepares our soul to receive the body, soul, and divinity of Christ in Holy Communion. He becomes one with us. There is no greater gift in all the world.

This is the Catholic Church that we love and that we owe more to than any power on earth. We need Her presence and Her grace in our life. This grace helps us understand what holiness means, that purity and generosity are beautiful in the eyes of God. Let us ask for God's Mercy and Love to surround us during the times when we become distracted and discouraged and wish to leave the Church. Let us remember Carlo Carretto and pray for the grace that he humbly and prayerfully stated:

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