



EASTER IS THE VICTORY OF LOVE OVER SIN

by Francesco D. Colacelli

"We know that the human being is wounded and the question of 'who man is' is obscured by this reality of sin that has injured human nature profoundly. People say when a person lies or steals, 'but that is only human.' However this is not being human. To be human means being generous, being good, being a just person, it means true prudence and wisdom."

This was the anthropological vision that Pope Benedict XVI gave last 18 February in the Hall of Blessings in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace in his address to the parish priests of the diocese of Rome during their traditional encounter at the beginning of Lent. This is a definition of man founded in Sacred Scripture, of the "authentic human being" who struggles in life to re-find within him the "image of God" that has been obscured through sin. However, these words, that for anyone with the faith would seem something obvious and taken for granted ended up on the front pages of the newspapers. The Pontiff's words had clearly shaken many consciences and gone against the grain with regards to an attitude now widespread.

The question does not concern just lying or stealing. At the heart of the matter is the loss of the sense of sin, that is the incapacity to distinguish between good and evil. And this is a problem that does not just concern those who do not have the faith but also many believers who, more or less unconsciously, adapt revelation to their own ends, to a selfish and erroneous worldly well-being. This explains the countless shallow confessions that the ministers of reconciliation hear and the frequent answer they get: "But what harm is there in that...?"

For this reason, three days later, as if continuing the same theme Benedict XVI in his homily of the Angelus, warned against the most dangerous and perhaps most general sin: "the love of power", that does not spare even the most fervent believers. "Power," the Italian author Ignazio Silone said, "is the most diabolical temptation that can be presented to man, if Satan even dared to tempt Christ with it." Jesus resisted this as well as the other two temptations through, "obedience and subjection to God's will which is the foundation of our being," explained the

Holy Father adding that, "this is also a great lesson to us: If the Word of God lives in our hearts and minds, if it becomes part of our very lives and if we place our trust in God we can resist every deception of the Tempter." This is not a prerogative just for the Son of God. We can all combat and overcome the seductions of evil and the suggestions of the devil. Padre Pio's whole life attests to this. He underwent even physical battle with the Evil One.

We cannot celebrate Easter if we forget that its real meaning is in the victory of love over sin. And there can be no victory over sin if we are not conscious of what sin is. For this reason, my wishes to you this Easter are that this may be an opportunity for reflection. And commencing with the words of the Vicar of Christ and with the example of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, may many consciences be awakened that have been blinded by the beauty of dreams that in reality are no more than illusions.

May every man discover that there is only one thing able to bring true happiness and that is love. ■