



WHAT WE MEAN BY HISTORY

by Bro MARIANO DI VITO

God has spoken in many ways but in these last times He has spoken through Christ in a final and definite way (cf. Heb 1, 1 ff.). We find in the Letter to the Hebrews the wonderful synthesis of this realisation of Almighty God's plan, who "speaks" His Word, in the fullness of time so that there is nothing further to add! (cf. Gal 4,4).

But... at times it seems as if everything has still to begin, and to the many conflicts, wars, and terrible calamities that assail entire areas of our planet involving millions of men and women, are also added the very violent actions of individuals driven by a hatred for human life. And often appropriating God's name that they use and abuse for their own ideologies and wants.

Rather than the 'fullness' of time, thinkers, sociologists, the newspapers and... pastors speak of a liquid fragmented society and of lives that are always more marginalised, isolated, aggressive and in continuous upheaval.

And yet this story, this history of ours, is Salvation History. The Holy Spirit continues to work, to uphold

and to guide the rocking boat of humanity that it may reach its goal and that God may be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15,28).

It is true, man and the whole of creation is marked by the tyranny of corruption (cf. Rm 8, 19-21); but this does not prevent the action of the Holy Spirit from working and renewing the face of the earth. St. Paul has enumerated with lucid clarity the terrible consequences of this corruption: affliction, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril, the sword... (cf. ivi). We have more than enough here for us to lay down our arms, to give up our lives to diversion and to abandon all attempt to seek anything beyond the simple historical horizon.

But we stubbornly continue to hope: "For in hope we were saved" (Rm 8,24). In fact, even in our times of weakness, in our doubts, fears and disillusionments we are called to acknowledge and to propagate Paul of Tarsus' splendidly clear profession of faith: "No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rm 8, 37 -39).

Paul's conviction justifies the faith of the Church in the loving assistance of the Holy Spirit and His discrete but efficient presence in

human history and at the same time gives strength to man's faith who is so loved by God that He did not spare His own Son. If He has given us "everything", He who neither the height nor the depth can contain, will He not also give us everything else along with Him? (cf. Rm 8,32).

When we say History, we do not specify that 'real', concrete, cruel history that is subservient to the ephemeral contingencies of unintelligible chance, nor that other history, that is the expression and consolatory projection of our false utopias and sham hopes...

No! History is one, and it flows forth from the loving designs of the Father, assumed and redeemed by the Son, and invigorated with the bursting fragrance of the Holy Spirit.

It is a history of desolation, full of sadness, violence, injustices and wrongdoings, but it is a history that has been redeemed, because joined to our suffering is Christ's suffering and victory (cf. Rm 15, 20ff.).

We are called, here and now, to do our part.

Like Padre Pio, who devotedly adhered to his Master as well as being the patient companion and friend of his brothers and sisters.

This is what we mean by History.

fr. Mariano Di Vito