**RECOVER OUR INHERITANCE**

At a Meeting in Rimini, from 20 to 26 August 2017, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, was asked to give a reflection on the theme of the meeting: *All that you have inherited from your fathers, recover it, in order to possess it* (a phrase taken from *Faust* by J.W. Goethe).

In his opening comment, the Prelate admitted that, as a believer and a Christian immersed in a historical context – such as the present - characterized by many changes and few firm points, even he has so many doubts and more questions than answers. "Ours is a time - the Archbishop noted - that forces us to be parents of ourselves; forced to live only in the present dimension, in which there is no place for God ... and we feel lost in the fragment."

Pizzaballa sought to describe how we can be Christians in such a present situation so as to appreciate what has been received from past generations. His was an entirely spiritual speech that barely touched upon the political or geostrategic issues of the Middle East today.

His reflection was supported by some biblical texts: Exodus 12; the parable of the talents (Matthew 25) and that of the hidden treasure and the precious pearl (Matthew 13); two passages of the Gospel according to John (7:2-6 and 20:18); Paul’s Letter to the Philippians (3:7-9), and references to numbers 21 and 22 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, published by Pope Paul VI in 1975.

The speaker, referring again to Goethe’s expression, observed that the inheritance, after having been received, must also be reinvested and made fruitful; that "you", the heir, must be adult, free, and capable of inheriting. Inheritance also always requires the exercise of remembering how much is received (as Exodus 12 warns us). "You must remember - says the Apostolic Administrator - and remember well, because a polluted memory is worse than forgetfulness."

What is this heritage for the Christian believer? Pizzaballa replies that it is God and the relationship with Him, along with all that comes with it.

Today, our relationship with tradition is complicated. We tend to reject what has been transmitted to us in the name of modernity, or else we reject modernity in order to cling to a certain way of understanding tradition and the values received, etc.

The Archbishop exhorts us, instead, to recover a serene and adult relationship with modernity, recovering the sense of a path that can lead us a long way; a sense that we discover what our fathers have handed on to us; a sense of desire and passion and that also copes with rejection by others.

To possess the inheritance, to receive it and to develop it - says Pizzaballa, - is done through small things in everyday experience: "We don’t waste time waiting for great opportunities. The difference is due to how we carry on without fear. "

The Christian stands on the frontier of modernity with the mind of Saint Paul in the Letter to the Philippians: he knows that he is redeemed and saved and what he loses of this world does not weigh him down. Knowing that very well, we need to distinguish between what is Christian and what is worldly; also, aware that not everything is sublime and that there is also rubbish. Discernment is necessary, because the treasure and the precious pearl that Jesus speaks about in the Gospel are hidden.

In the past - the Archbishop commented - the desire of our fathers built the cathedrals. We will probably have to do something else to tell our contemporaries that God was made man so that man may remain human; something that is characterized by a Christian style, free from making demands on the world. In this regard, Pope Paul VI enlightens us with his *Evangelii nuntiandi,* already quoted.

The dynamism of the Christian experience must not become a *marketing* strategy. The spirit of the Kingdom is courteous and hospitable, although not indifferent to anything.

Archbishop Pizzaballa concluded with a suggestion taken from the biblical text, which begins with a garden and ends with a city: Jerusalem. God by himself created a garden, but not a city. To build the city, the collaboration and the alliance of his children are required.