

“Do you have in your heart the wind of joy?”

Catechesis on Memory, Hope and Vocation (translation)

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Pope Francis continued his catechesis on Hope during his Wednesday General Audience, August 30, 2017 in St. Peter's Square. Challenging especially the young, he said all must answer the question: “Do I have in me, in my heart, the wind of joy?”

He used the example of Jesus's call to the first disciples and how that call to vocation involved hope and memory. He noted that one disciple – John – recalled the exact time, even in his old age, “a clear memory of youth, which remained intact in his memory as an elderly man.”

The Pope echoed the questions Jesus asked the first disciples: “You, who are young, what do you seek? In your heart, what do you seek?” He said that young people who seek nothing “are not young people; they are retired, they have grown old before the time.”

There are many ways to discover a vocation, according to the Pope. But he said that “every vocation begins with an encounter with Jesus who gives us a new joy and hope.” This applies to marriage, consecrated life, and the priesthood, and leads us, also through trials and difficulties, to an “ever fuller encounter, that encounter grows greater; the encounter with Him and to the fullness of joy.”

Here is ZENIT's full translation of Pope Francis' Italian catechesis.

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Catechesis on Hope and Memory

Today I would like to return to a very important topic: the relation between hope and memory, with particular reference to the memory of a vocation. And I take as an example Jesus' call to the first disciples. This experience remained

so imprinted in their memory, that one of them even made a note of the hour: “for it was about the tenth hour” (*John* 1:39). The evangelist John recounts the episode as a clear memory of youth, which remained intact in his memory as an elderly man, because John wrote these things when he was already elderly.

The meeting happened near the river Jordan, where John the Baptist was baptizing; and those young Galileans had chosen the Baptist as spiritual guide. One day Jesus came, and had Himself baptized in the river. He went there again the next day, and then the Baptizer, that is, John the Baptist said to two of his disciples, “Behold the Lamb of God!” (v. 36).

It was a “spark” for those two. They left their first teacher and went to follow Jesus. On the way, He turned to them and asked the decisive question: “What do you seek?” (v. 38). Jesus appears in the Gospels as an expert of the human heart. At that moment He had met two youths who were seeking, healthily restless. In fact, what youth is a satisfied youth without a question of meaning? Young people who don’t seek anything are not young people; they are retired, they have grown old before the time. It’s sad to see young people in retirement. And Jesus, throughout the Gospel, in all the meetings that happen to Him along the way, appears as an “ignitor” of hearts. Hence His question seeks to have the desire emerge for life and of happiness that every youth bears inside: “What do you seek?” I would also like to ask the young people who are here in the Square today, and those listening through the media: “You, who are young, what do you seek? In your heart, what do you seek?”

John’s and Andrew’s vocation began thus. It was the beginning of such a strong friendship with Jesus as to impose a commonality of life and of passions with Him. The two disciples begin to be with Jesus and are transformed immediately into missionaries, because when the meeting ends they don’t return home calmly: so true is this that their respective brothers – Simon and James – are soon involved in the following. They went to them and said: We have found the Messiah; we have found a great prophet”: they gave the news. They are missionaries of that encounter. It was such a touching, happy encounter that the disciples would remember for ever that day that illuminated and oriented their youth.

How does one discover one’s vocation in this world? It can be discovered in many ways, but this page of the Gospel tells us that the first indication is the joy of the encounter with Jesus. Marriage, consecrated life, priesthood: every vocation begins with an encounter with Jesus who gives us a new joy and hope

and leads us, also through trials and difficulties, to an ever fuller encounter, that encounter grows greater; the encounter with Him and to the fullness of joy.

The Lord doesn't want reluctant men and women walking behind Him, without having in their heart the wind of joy. You, who are in the Square, I ask you – each one answer to himself – do you have in your heart the wind of joy? Each one should ask himself: "Do I have in me, in my heart, the wind of joy?" Jesus wants people who have experienced that to be with Him giving an immense happiness, which can be renewed every day of life. A disciple of the Kingdom of God who isn't joyous doesn't evangelize this world; he is sad. We become preachers of Jesus not by sharpening the arms of rhetoric: you can talk, talk, talk but if there isn't something else, how do we become preachers of Jesus? By keeping in our eyes the twinkle of true happiness. We see so many Christians, also among us, who with their eyes transmit to one the joy of the faith: with their eyes!

Therefore, a Christian, as the Virgin Mary, protects the flame of his falling in love, in love with Jesus. Certainly, there are trials in life; there are moments in which one must go on despite the cold and adverse winds, despite much bitterness. But Christians know the way that leads to that sacred fire that lighted them once and for all.

But please, I recommend: let us not heed disappointed and unhappy persons, let us not listen to one who recommends cynically not to cultivate hope in life; let us not trust one who extinguishes at birth every enthusiasm saying that no enterprise is worth the sacrifice of a whole life. We don't listen to the "old" of heart who suffocate youthful euphoria. We go to the old who have eyes shining with hope! Instead, we cultivate healthy utopias: God want us capable of dreaming as He does and with Him, while we walk very attentive to the reality, to dream of a different world. And if a dream is extinguished, go back to dream it again, drawing with hope from the memory of the origins, of those embers that, perhaps after a not very good life, are hidden under the ashes of the first encounter with Jesus.

Here then is a fundamental dynamic of Christian life: to remember Jesus. Paul said to his disciple: "Remember Jesus Christ" (2 *Timothy* 2:8); this is the advice of the great Saint Paul: "Remember Jesus Christ." To remember Jesus, the fire of love with which one day we conceived our life as a project of goodness, and to revive our hope with this flame.