

Settimo Cielo



di Sandro Magister

20 mar

Coronavirus. Two Church Pastors, Two Styles. Their Words Compared

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On the same day of Wednesday March 18, Pope Francis and Cardinal Camillo Ruini gave two interviews on the coronavirus emergency.

The pope to Paolo Rodari for "la Repubblica," the newspaper founded by Eugenio Scalfari.

Cardinal Ruini to "TG2 Post," the in-depth talk show conducted by Manuela Moreno that follows the evening news on RAI 2.

Here are the transcripts of the two interviews. Let the reader compare.

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POPE FRANCIS: "DON'T WASTE THESE DIFFICULT DAYS"

VATICAN CITY – "During these difficult days we can find small, concrete gestures expressing closeness and concreteness towards the people closest to us, a caress for our grandparents, a kiss for our children, for the people we love. These are important, decisive gestures. If we live these days like this, they won't be wasted."

Pope Francis spends his days in the Vatican following closely the news on the coronavirus emergency. Two days ago he went to Santa Maria Maggiore and to the church of San Marcello al Corso to pray. He tells la Repubblica what these days are teaching him.

Q: Holy Father, what did you ask for when you prayed in the two Roman churches?

A: I asked the Lord to stop the epidemic: Lord, stop it with your hand. That's what I prayed for.

Q: How can one live these days so that they are not wasted?

A: We must rediscover the concreteness of little things, small gestures of attention we can offer those close to us, our family, our friends. We must understand that in small things lies our treasure. These gestures of tenderness, affection, compassion, are minimal and tend to be lost in the anonymity of everyday life, but they are nonetheless decisive, important. For example, a hot meal, a caress, a hug, a phone call... They are familiar gestures of attention to the details of everyday life that make life meaningful and that create communion and communication amongst us.

Q: Isn't it how we always live?

A: Sometimes, we only experience a virtual form of communication with one another. Instead, we should discover a new closeness. More concrete relationships made of attention and patience. In their homes, families often eat together in great silence, but not as a result of listening to each other, rather because the parents watch television while they eat, and children are on their mobile phones. They look like monks, all isolated from each other. Here there is no communication, whereas listening to each other is important because that's how we can understand the needs, efforts, desires of the other. This language made of concrete gestures must be safeguarded. In my opinion, the pain of these days should open us up to this concreteness.

Q: Many people have lost loved ones, many others are fighting on the front line to save lives. What can you say to them?

A: I thank those who give themselves in this way to others. They are an example of this concreteness. And I ask everyone to stay close to those who have lost loved ones, to be close to them in every possible way. Consolation must now be everyone's commitment. In this respect, I was very impressed by the article Fabio Fazio wrote for Repubblica on what he is learning in these days.

Q: What, in particular?

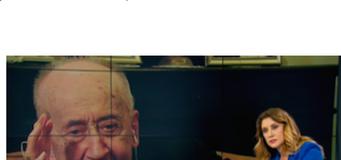
A: Various passages, but in general the fact that our behaviour always affects the lives of others. He is right, for example, when he says: "It has become evident that those who do not pay taxes do not only commit a felony but also a crime: if there are not enough hospital beds and artificial respirators, it is also their fault." I was very impressed by this.

Q: How can those who do not have faith have hope in days like these?

A: They are all God's children and are looked upon by Him. Even those who have not yet met God, those who do not have the gift of faith, can find their way through this, in the good things they believe in: they can find strength in love for their children, for their family, for their brothers and sisters. One can say: "I cannot pray because I do not believe." But at the same time, however, he can believe in the love of the people around him, and thus find hope.

(Translated by Luis E. Moriones)

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RUINI: "THE RISEN CHRIST IS OUR GREAT HOPE"

Q: Cardinal, in this emergency Italy has perhaps also rediscovered the small treasures that are hidden inside our homes. Is this so?

A: Yes, I believe that this truly tragic moment is leading us to rediscover the importance of the relationship with God and therefore of prayer. At least that is how I am living it: a moment in which I wholeheartedly entrust myself to the Lord and his mercy.

Q: But how can we turn this dramatic moment into a resource, a rediscovery of our humanity as well, of our sentiments, of mutual assistance?

A: I believe that this moment is driving us to solidarity. We all understand that we are in the same boat, that we must try to help each other, because this is a matter of life or death. And here again faith can be of great help, because faith tells us precisely this, that we are all brothers, children of one Father, who watches over us. And we must believe in this, believe that we are not alone, not only because there are other people with us, but also because in the face of death the Christian knows that death does not have the last word. This must be said, because when one speaks of hundreds of dead, and naturally of many people who lose their loved ones, this question inevitably arises: does everything end with death? Or is death a passage, which is sorrowful, dramatic, but towards life? This is why the risen Christ is our great hope, he is the point of reference. Let us cling to him! Let us believe in him!

Q: Many of the faithful are also a little disoriented right now, because to avoid contagion they cannot even meet God in church. What is the comfort that we can give to those who cannot actually live their religiosity, their faith in church?

A: I believe that we can find God in our conscience. Jesus said: when you pray, shut yourself in your room and pray. External circumstances are important, of course, going to church is important, but above all the inner relationship with God is important.

I would like to emphasize the importance of trust. We must not lose trust. It is true that this coronavirus has somewhat defeated us, for now. But it is also true that man will be able to win. He will be able to win through mutual solidarity, of course, but also through his ingenuity, the ingenuity of man who comes from God and who will also bring us to find remedies for the coronavirus. Whether it's a treatment, a vaccine, or whatever it is, I don't know when this will happen but I am convinced that we will also overcome the coronavirus, and for this we must have trust and ask the Lord to make the best use of the capacities he has given us.

Q: We saw last Sunday the images of Pope Francis on the deserted streets of Rome, we saw him pray in front of the Crucifix of St. Marcellus, at St. Mary Major. And today he released an interview with "la Repubblica" in which he spoke of the concreteness of the little things, of turning this isolation into the discovery of a treasure. The exhortation was in the title: "Do not waste these difficult days." How does one do this, cardinal?

A: These days offer us new spaces. While we are stuck at home, while we have to give up our usual activities, we have more time to devote ourselves to other things. And one of these is certainly rediscovering mutual relationships, rediscovering our affections, our friendships, the values that keep us united. And as I said before, the rediscovery of our relationship with the Lord goes along the same lines. So in this way we can certainly turn to the good, turn into value, even those things that we must undergo to respect the rules and to fight the coronavirus. I would also like to say that it is very important that, as the pope said, each of us try to do everything possible, that each of us know that it is also his responsibility. Every man is free, every man is responsible. We must be aware of this and never let ourselves go. Unfortunately, there are also very negative examples - we must say it in this circumstance - of people who are taking advantage of the disaster to try to gain some paltry personal economic advantage. But in the face of this there are many positive testimonials, we think of doctors, nurses, but not only them. Well, our freedom is in part responsible for this. We are free persons, we can consciously decide to make good use of all the resources we have, also in the sense of solidarity and help for those who need us most.

Q: Cardinal, many people are leaving us on account of this cursed virus, and the saddest thing is that they go off in solitude. Often there is not even the possibility of having a funeral.

A: This is really very sad: not being able to be close to loved ones who are leaving us. We hope that the people who are there, the nurses, the nurses, say a good word to them, that through them they may feel that they are not abandoned. And above all I would like to pray to the Lord to make them feel that he is close and waiting for them, like the Father waiting for his son who returns home, as the Father in the parable was waiting for the prodigal son, as Abraham was waiting for the poor Lazarus who was dying.

Condividi:



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English



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