

TROUBLESOME THOUGHTS...

A few days ago, a group of Orthodox students from Minnesota, USA visited our Patriarchate. I had the pleasure of welcoming these young people, showing them around the Patriarchal See, but also chatting with them for a long time.

Naturally, our conversation extended to life issues, to concerns that young people have at the beautiful age of 20 – 25 and feel the need, but also the comfort, to put them to a member of the clergy, who they feel can follow their thinking and their anxieties.

A major question in this age of the “spreading the wings” in life, is the relationships between people. Approach, communication, human contact, interpersonal relationships, love. Once again, with pain in my soul, I realized both the difficulty in approaching, and the irresolution in the “giving”, in the courage needed to move towards someone.

In general, I am tormented by a question, which was gradually cultivated mainly in the Sacrament of Confession, during the total of 23 years of my priestly and hierarchical ministry. Almost 9 out of 10 people who go to confession, regardless of gender, will talk about their “good intentions to connect with another person...to give tenderness, to offer love...to understand...to accompany...to... , but they have not yet met the appropriate person, the unique or special one, in the vast modern loneliness etc...etc... ” I repeat, almost 9 out of 10!

I wonder, however, when people leave confession or private conversation – where they have declared their inner readiness for human approach – and return to everyday life, where do they get “lost” or what are they absorbed by so that they are unable to meet each other and to put their “good intentions” into practice?

How and when, in short, will they consciously step out of the “I” to move toward the “we”? How, are they trapped in it unconsciously, while feeling self-righteous at the same time?

Because what else is disposition – at least – for a loving relationship (I do not dare to speak in detail about love per se), except a conscious intention to move from the inside to out, from “I” to “we”? It is an emptying act, a dynamic act, involving a disposition of sacrificial offering. Certainly, an act that requires internal preparation.

This thought inevitably leads to another question, even more tormenting: The vast majority of “well-off” young children, what spiritual (in the broadest sense of the term) resources do they bring from their contemporary -born after the war, largely with deprivations – parents? In this anthropological process, where and how does the shepherding Church actually influence?

In what way and by what intra-family example do they shape their children’s personalities, combined with education in general and the existing education system, so that they find it so difficult to approach each other in depth and to be able to share generously and with creative joy feelings, soul and time;

And finally, the tragically increasing use of psychotropic chemicals/chems (to the point of death sometimes!) by today’s youth, in order to be able to have fun or flirt – let’s be honest – from which need does it emanate, from which fear is it reinforced and in the silencing of which internal “distractions” does it aim;

Unfortunately, I am afraid that in our superficial well-being and our hypertrophic “I”, we have not understood that “the sea is not crooked, we are navigating incorrectly”...

