



The Holy See

HOLY MASS OF SUFFRAGE FOR MANUELA CAMAGNI

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Pauline Chapel

Thursday, 2 December 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the last days of her life, our beloved Manuela spoke of the fact that 29 November would be her 30th anniversary as a member of the *Memores Domini* community. And she said this with great joy, preparing herself – this was the impression she gave – for an inner celebration of this 30-year journey towards the Lord, in the communion of the Lord’s friends. The celebration, however, was different from the one she had foreseen: on 29 November we took her to the cemetery, we sang that the Angels would accompany her to Heaven, we led her to the definitive celebration, to the great feast of God, to the Nuptials of the Lamb. For 30 years she had been on her way towards the Lord, entering the celebration of the Lord.

Manuela was a “wise and prudent virgin”, she carried oil in her lamp, the oil of faith, a faith lived, a faith nourished by prayer, by conversation with the Lord, by meditation on the word of God, by communion in friendship with Christ. And this faith was hope and wisdom, it was the certainty that faith opens up the true future. And faith was charity; it was giving herself for others, living in the service of the Lord for others. I, personally, must give thanks for her willingness to devote her efforts to work in my house with a spirit of charity and hope that comes from faith.

She entered the feast of the Lord as a prudent and wise virgin because she had not lived in the superficiality of those who forget the greatness of our vocation, but in the great vision of eternal life, and thus she was prepared for the Lord’s arrival.

Thirty years a *Memores Domini*; St Bonaventure says that the memory of the Creator is engraved in the depths of our being. And precisely because this memory is engraved in our being, we can

recognize the Creator in his creation, we can remember him, we can see traces of him in this cosmos that he created. St Bonaventure also says that this remembrance of the Creator is not only remembrance of the past, because the origins are present, it is a memory of the Lord's presence. It is also a memory of the future, because it is the certainty that we come from the goodness of God and are called to reach the goodness of God. In this memory, therefore, the element of joy is present, our origins in the joy that is God and our call to reach his great joy.

And we know that Manuela was a person inwardly penetrated by joy, that very joy which derives from the memory of God. However St Bonaventure adds that our memory, like the whole of our life, is also wounded by sin: so it is that the memory is clouded and covered by other superficial memories. We can no longer go beyond these other superficial memories to the very bottom, to the true memory that sustains our being. Therefore, because of this obliviousness of God, this forgetfulness of our fundamental memory, joy too is concealed, darkened. Yes, we know that we are created for joy, but we no longer know where to find joy and we seek it in various places. Today we see this desperate quest for joy that drifts ever further away from its true source, from true joy. Forgetfulness of God, forgetfulness of our true memory. Manuela was not one of those who had forgotten this memory. She lived in the living memory of the Creator, in the joy of his creation, seeing the transparency of God in all creation, even in the daily events of our lives, and she knew that from this memory — present and future — comes joy.

Memores Domini. The *Memores Domini* know that on the eve of his Passion, Christ renewed, indeed uplifted our memory. "Do this in memory of me", he said, and thus he gave us the memory of his Presence, the memory of his gift of himself, of the gift of his Body and of his Blood, and in this gift of his Body and his Blood, in this gift of his infinite love with our memory we touch once again the stronger presence of God, his gift of himself. As a *Memores Domini*, Manuela actually experienced this living memory, that the Lord gives himself with his Body and renews our knowledge of God.

In the controversy of the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection, the Lord said to them — who did not believe in it: but God called himself the "God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob". The three are part of God's name, they are inscribed in God's name, they are in God's name, in the memory of God, and thus the Lord says: God is not a God of the dead, he is a God of the living, and those who are part of God's name, who are in the memory of God, are alive. We, human beings, with our memory, can unfortunately only preserve a shadow of the people we have loved. The memory of God, however, does not preserve only shadows, it is the origin of life; here the dead are alive, in his life and with his life they have entered the memory of God which is life. The Lord says this to us today: you are inscribed in the name of God, you live in God with true life, you live by the true source of life. Thus we are comforted in this moment of grief. And the Liturgy renewed after the Council dares to teach us also to sing "Alleluia" in the Mass for the Dead. This is bold! We feel above all the sorrow of loss, we feel above all the absence, the past, but the Liturgy knows that we are in the Body of Christ itself and live on the memory of God which is our memory.

In this interweaving of his memory and our memory we are together, we are alive. Let us pray the Lord that we may feel this communion of memory more and more, that our memory of God in Christ may become ever more alive, and thus that we may feel that our true life is in him and that in him we all remain united. In this sense let us sing “Alleluia”, certain that the Lord is life and that his love is never ending. Amen.

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