

MENNAISIAN NOVENA

May 2019

"THERE WILL BE SAINTS AMONGST CHILDREN" (Pius X)

"Your mission is to sanctify yourself by making your students saints."

These affirmations, in the mouth of a Saint Pope and our Venerable Founder are very clear: children can become saints. But do we seriously believe in it today, or do we not think that it is exaggerated, that it is a way of speaking, but denied by reality? In our pedagogical and apostolic history don't we have - and this is a mistake - a tradition of portraits or biographies of "holy" pupils.

Or children and young saints, officially recognized as such by the Church, no. Neither examples of pupils particularly sensitive to the faith, friends of Jesus, attentive to others, courageous in adversity, apostles to their comrades, faithful and ardent to the Eucharist and prayer, ready to serve their most troubled comrades. And yet, of these children and young people we have known so many personally, and we should find a way to make known their testimony, even if it is simple and ordinary.

Perhaps we should be more attentive to this simple, repetitive sanctity, made up of little everyday things, attitudes that indicate the choice to love Jesus, to be attentive to others and to do ones duty well and to live in serenity so as to bring peace and joy. Holiness - and especially that of the little ones - is not made of heroic and extraordinary things and exceptional moments.

It is this slow and silent growth that puts one heart to heart with Jesus, Mary, the Saints, the Angels, which makes one emerge from self-centeredness and distractions of consumerism, which make people look up to God the Father and have a behavior of praise and gratitude, which make one become a brother to all, with a special sensitivity for those who suffer or are in need, which make one courageous in trials by joining Jesus in his crucified love.

And there are many of these children and young people among our students and in our groups. It's about putting them "on the candelabra". As in the days of Jean-Marie.

He knew how to highlight the testimony of the young "saints" he met in the groups. He knew how to talk about great causes to the pupils of the classes he visited, that is, how to devote oneself to God and to others. He usually requested for news about the apostolic spiritual progress where there had not been before, especially in missions. *"The story of the fruits of your apostolate pleases me greatly. Continue working like this and let me participate in the beautiful works you do"*. This is how he spoke to the first missionary Brothers who informed the Father of the fruits of conversion and growth in faith among the participants of the retreats of the First Communion, the newly baptized, the slaves in plantations and the school students.

It would be good that there could be young Saints in the Mennaisian Congregations founded for the apostolate amongst children and young people. The Church has already known so many: Dominic Savio, pupil of Don Bosco, Laura Vicuna, young saint of South America, the shepherds of Fatima, full of courage and faith, the young Holy Martyrs of Africa, the blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Marcel Callo, the apostle of the extermination camps, Maria Goretti, full of courage and goodness, ... Another group of little and young saints is in preparation: Carlo Acuti, Antionetta Meo, Rachel Beckuit and so many others.

Yes, let us believe in our Father, among the little ones there are saints and we will sanctify ourselves by helping them to become saints.