

HOMILY

How beautiful is this paragon chosen by Jesus: «Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit».

Of course, it must be a full grain of wheat, swollen, full of life!

How beautiful is this simple catechesis that nature offers us at all times «If you complete your life, and you live it in terms of giving; of a gift received and given away with fruit – this is the Christian *handing over* –, you enter into the dynamics of the powerful multiplication of life (the power of the Spirit) and you naturally become a collaborator of the Creator: a communicator and sower of his Peace», as the *Responsorial psalm* suggests to us:

«Ask peace for Jerusalem: let there be peace for those who love you.

Let there be peace on your walls, security on your ramparts.

For my brothers and my friends I shall say: may peace be upon you». (Psalm 122,6-8)

Fr. Silvio was a semiologist, and he knew how to read both on the level of denotation and that of connotation the semiotic complexity of the evangelical signs. But as a good “Pauline” semiologist, he knew that it is not enough to decode and interpret correctly the evangelical signs, because the evangelical semiosis, that is, the evangelical communicative process, has as its ultimate act, life once again. It is a matter, therefore, of signs that are to be lived, of signs that are to be witnessed to. And Fr. Silvio, through his person, knew how to transmit them and make of them an object of that «new, long and profound evangelization that the world needs», which was the charismatic mandate received by Fr. Alberione. The words «new, long and profound evangelization that the world needs» – we know well – are words of Fr. Alberione written in n. 8 of the *Unione Cooperatori Buona Stampa*, on 20 August 1926.

Fr. Silvio has been the disciple who has followed Christ «where He is», that is, up to death that is given. One who has been at his side in these years can testify that «he has not held on to life» or to his own self, but has made of it a gift FOR the whole Pauline Family and WITH the whole Pauline Family.

Now we see his death, but he urges us to look at life, he pushes us in this his last evangelizing action to not stop at what is *denoted*, but at what is *connoted*. In other words, not to stop at the evident reality of death, but to seize the «mystery of glory»: because, if the grain of wheat dies, it does so to break the wall of death and bear much fruit and that the fruit should remain.

What about us? Do we perhaps hold on to life, to our fears, to our own selves?

Coming to our help is our Father and Founder Saint Paul:

«But in all these things we are more than victors; thanks to him who has loved us». (Rom 8,37)

Now it's up to us to read and interpret this "sign." Yes, the sign of the death of Fr. Silvio. We cannot in an instant cancel his life, we cannot in an instant cancel what he has left us, what with energy he has told us and written to us.

How many words has he transmitted to us which perhaps we still have not had the time to read: what are we waiting for? ...

Lord, help us in this trial!

The grain of wheat is dead, now is the time of the fruit, of much fruit, in Christ!

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