

THEODOROS II: AN URGENT NEED OF OUR TIMES TO CHANGE I THINK THEREFORE I AM INTO I LOVE THEREFORE I AM

On the afternoon of Tuesday 1st October 2013, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, participating in the closing event of the meeting organized by the Community of St Egidio in Rome, titled The Courage of Hope, prayed for the unity and peace of the world in the Basilica di Santa Maria in Ara Coeli, taking the opportunity from the extract of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 3:26-28: "For there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". He noted specifically:

An urgent need in our time is the achievement of a new unity on the current model of the creation of the world and of man by God. God created the world and man through love and with freedom, without need, and through His personal action, He communicates and relates with others, the world and mankind. So, man also need to reconstitute his life to its true perspective: live does not only mean simply I exist, but I coexist and associate with others, those who are different, those who are otherwise, the one who is my opposite.

An urgent need in our time is exceeding the arbitrariness against our fellow man and the unconditional respect of his freedom in the standards of the divine gift of human freedom. God gave freedom to mankind, through which mankind attains a consciousness of self and the ability to rise to God. God does not violate man's freedom, even when he follows the path of destruction. So man then ought to redefine his freedom: it is not only he does only as he pleases who is free, but also the one who does the thing he wants to do; the one who is free is not the one who burdens others with his choices, but the one who accepts the burden of his responsibilities.

An urgent need in our time is the Cartesian principle "I think therefore I am" to be transformed into "I love therefore I am", in the standards of the unconditional love of God for His Creation. God was incarnated through love so that God could become Godlike with freedom. So it is that man should, when he loves, to sacrifice, even in part, his freedom for the sake of another, because human existence is validated only within the communion of love.

The Head of the communion of love is our Lord Jesus Christ, who reinstated the sanctity and the grandeur of man, eliminating the world of disruption, alienation, racial discrimination and hatred. Christ received the entire human race and reconstructed it into its organic unity. This unity is not static and one-dimensional. It has a dynamic variety, because unity is achieved through the community of persons, according to the prototype of the unity of the Three Person of the Holy Trinity.

Our Lord, as the "king of righteousness" (Hebrews 7:2), renounced "the one who loves injustice" as "hating his own soul" (Psalm 11:5) and decreed that in His kingdom there will be no place for enmity and intolerance, because "The wolf will live with the lamb the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together" (Isaiah 11:6).

And so today we pray that the universe will return to its former beauty, as God "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). We pray today that the difference in values between people as a grading factor of their rights, to disappear. We pray that unity will be consolidated in the axiomatic right of mankind to differ. We pray for the destruction of the dividing wall of prejudice, which the Lord first threw down when

he replied to the question "who is my neighbour" (Luke 10:29) through the disarming parable of the Good Samaritan.

We pray that the tree of peace will take root, blossom and bear fruit on the ground that is fertilized by the confession that every person, regardless of colour, race, nationality, religion, language, is an equal bearer of the image of God. We pray that life in our world will become peaceful, keeping in mind that life means first and foremost cohabitation, relations with others, those who are different but totally accepted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!