



FIAT – Newsletter nr. 75 – September 2021

Why are you a Christian?

after L.J. Cardinal Suenens

Being a Christian today is no longer self-evident. It is rather an exception. Faith is often mistakenly thought of as something that is passed on from generation to generation and then gradually fades away. But how is it then, that after more than 2000 years there are still so many Christians, that adults and older children are still being baptised until this day, and that the churches are regularly welcoming young families again? The answer seems complex but it is actually very simple according to Cardinal Suenens: it is not by our merit.



“Even today, Jesus is being born from Mary and the Holy Spirit.”

+ L.J. Cardinal Suenens

An encounter with the Lord

You are a Christian because Jesus has come to meet you. It was him who initiated this meeting. From the moment of our Baptism, without realising this, he has taken possession of us, mysteriously. Little by little, his life has grown in us through the sacraments we have received, especially the celebration of the Eucharist. This is the transformation that the Lord has also fulfilled in Cardinal Suenens. “Step by step, he led me to the fulness of the priesthood,” he writes. “revealing himself to me ever more fully through his inspired Word, read, re-read, meditated on, and translated into images, in the lives of the saints who allowed themselves to be formed by him.”

The love of the Lord

God’s love is a blessed gift that we are permeated with as Christians. “For my part, while I remain totally free, I can only say that I feel ashamed at my failure to respond to grace, and I marvel at the constancy of the Saviour’s unfailing love which goes beyond my weakness and poverty,” Cardinal Suenens witnesses.

“This personal and faithful love has been particularly evident to me in the course of certain events of my life, especially during those ‘chance’ occurrences which are said to disguise the workings of Providence. I have experienced this many times: in an encounter here, a coincidence there, the same attentive, ingenious presence was there, calling the tune.”

The Christian Community

Cardinal Suenens also advocates the importance of meeting with Christ risen and active in other Christians: “genuine Christians of rare depth. There is nothing to equal the value of this ‘catechism in images’, he says. “From them I learned that one is not fully Christianised until one has, in turn, become a Christianiser, and that is far reaching!

Experience versus intellect

In his answer to why he is a Christian, Cardinal Suenens mainly talks about his experience. But he certainly also recognizes the importance of the intellectual side of faith. "As for the level of 'faith seeking understanding', the intellectual level to which a large part of my life has been dedicated, I can only say with Newman that 'a thousand difficulties do not constitute a single doubt'. The world is at once dark and bright. For me the Powers of Evil are not a myth, but the darkness does not prevent me from believing in the sun, in its light or in its heat. God, who is both truth and love, remains for ever the sun of our lives and it is Jesus who has revealed this to me."

Summary

Coming back to the initial question "Why are you a Christian?" Cardinal Suenens answers:

"Because Jesus took possession of me at the outset of my life and has become, for me and in me, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. I feel like proclaiming it in song with Mary's Magnificat."

Course: L.J. Cardinal Suenens,
The Christian at the Dawn of a New Era
pp. 16-18.

Responsible editor: Roger Matthys, FIAT Association asbl - Copyright © 2020 – All rights reserved.
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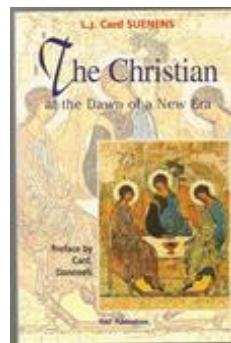
"Whatever the gift that you're willing to present to God, do not forget to entrust it to Mary,

because grace goes back to the donor through the same channel that brought it. "

(St Bernard, 12th century)

We are very often invited to offer reductions on costs for sending rosaries and various evangelization tools to economically weak countries. We are grateful for financial support.

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