

# To make God the Father known and honoured

From testimony of H.E. Alexandre Caillot, Bishop of Grenoble,  
at the end of the canonical enquiry into the case  
of Mother Eugenia Elisabetta Ravasio

(...) The object of the mission which would appear to have been entrusted to Mother Eugenia is precise and, from the doctrinal point of view, I see it as legitimate and timely. Its precise object is to make God the Father known and honoured, mainly by the institution of a special feast which has been requested of the Church. The enquiry established that a liturgical feast in honour of the Father would be quite in keeping with Catholic practice as a whole. It would accord with the traditional trust of Catholic prayer, which ascends to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, as shown by the prayers of the Mass and the liturgical oblation to the Father during the Holy Sacrifice.

However, it is strange that there is no special feast in honour of the Father. The Trinity is honoured as such, the Word and the Holy Spirit are honoured by the mission and external manifestations. Only the Father has no feast of His own which would draw the attention of the Christian people to his Person.

This is the reason why a fairly extensive survey of the faithful has shown that, in the various social classes and even among many priests and religious, "the Father is unknown, no one prays to Him, no one thinks of Him". The survey reveals, rather surprisingly, that a large number of Christians remain distant from the Father because they see Him as a terrifying judge. They prefer to turn to Christ's humanity. And how many ask Jesus to protect them from the Father's anger!

A special feast would thus have the effect firstly of re-establishing order in the spirituality of many Christians and, secondly, of leading them back to the Divine Saviour's instructions: "Everything you ask the Father in My name..." and again "You will pray like this: 'Our Father...'"

A liturgical feast dedicated to God the Father would also have the effect of raising our eyes towards the One Whom the apostle St. James called "the Father of light, from Whom every gift comes..." It would accustom souls to consider God's goodness and His fatherly providence. They would realize that this providence is truly that of God the Holy Trinity, and that it is because of his divine nature, common to all three Persons, that God spreads through the world the ineffable treasures of his infinite mercy.

It would seem, at first sight, as if there were no special reason to honour the Father in particular. But was it not the Father who sent His Son into the world? If it is supremely right to show devotion to the Son and the Holy Spirit because of their external manifestations, would it not be right and proper to give thanks to God the Father, as the Prefaces of the Mass require, for the gift He sent us, His Son?

The real object of this special feast thus becomes plain: to honour the Father, to thank Him, to praise Him for having giving us His Son; in a word, as the message states, as the Author of our Redemption; to thank Him Who loved the world so much that He gave His only-begotten Son, so that all men might be brought together in the Mystical Body of Christ and, together with His Son, become His children.

At a time when the world is troubled by secular doctrines, atheism and modern philosophies and no longer recognizes God, the true God, would not this feast make known to many the living Father, the Father of mercy and goodness, Whom Jesus has revealed to us? Would it not contribute to an increase in the number of those who worship the Father "in spirit and in truth", to whom Jesus referred? Now, when the world is being torn apart by deadly wars, when it feels the need to seek a solid principle of union to bring the peoples closer together, this feast would bring a great light. It would teach men that they all have the same Father in Heaven: the One Who gave them Jesus, towards Whom He draws them as members of His Mystical Body in the unity of the same Spirit of Love! When so many souls are weary and tired of the tribulations of war, they may be hungering for a deep spiritual life.

Might not such a feast call them, then, "from within", to worship the Father who hides Himself, and to offer themselves in a filial and generous oblation to the Father, the only source of the life of the Holy Trinity in them? Would it not preserve that fine movement of supernatural life which naturally draws souls towards spiritual childhood and through confidence and towards filial life with the Father, towards abandonment to the divine will, towards the spirit of faith?

On the other hand, a problem of doctrine arises, quite apart from the question of a special feast and regardless of what the Church may decide on this matter. Some eminent theologians believe that the doctrine of the Soul's relationship with the Trinity needs to be examined more deeply, and that it could be for souls a source of enlightenment on the life of union with the Father and the Son, about which St. John speaks, and on the sharing in the life of Jesus, Son of the Father, especially in His filial love for the Father. (...)