



"You cannot announce the Gospel with a funeral face." The provocation of Pope Francis is not a casual joke, and the idea that Christians should not be sad is not new: "You should sing me better songs, so that I Decide to believe in your Savior! It would be necessary for his disciples to look more like saved people!" Said Nietzsche.

But how to be able to smile when worries, work, small mistimes and great pains are so prevalent in life?

The first smile is the fundamental: "Smile the One in heaven," says the Bible. And yet, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It's the smile of God. The joy with which the creator contemplates each of his creatures must be the solid foundation of the serenity and peace of each one of us.

But cannot it be irreverent to think that God, the Lord of the Universe, smiles? "God must love us all the more the more we make him laugh", says a character created by Ray Bradbury. "I never thought of the Lord as a humorist", someone answers. The answer is immediate: "The creator of the Platypus, the camel, the ostrich and the man? Oh, come on!"

The second smile is the one I look at myself with. Without losing sight of my humanity, my limits, which are not necessarily flaws and should not be taken too seriously. My creator wants me so, as I am, because if he wanted me differently, he would have made me different.

"Knowing how to see the funny aspect of life and its cheerful dimension, without taking everything in a tragic way", Benedict XVI once said, is something very important, I would say necessary, for my ministry. A writer said that Angels can fly because they don't take too seriously. And maybe we could fly a little more if we didn't get so important.

Smiling is an act of humility, it means that I accept myself and my way of being, staying where I am with holy peace. Without taking me very seriously, because "seriousness is not a virtue." It may be a heresy to say that seriousness is a vice, but at least it is an intelligent heresy. There is really a tendency (a kind of decay) to be taken seriously because it is the easiest attitude to live in. Solemnity is typical of men who do not want to make an effort, whereas a laugh demands enthusiasm, it is easy to be sad, and it is difficult to be simple, Satan fell by the force of gravity (Chesterton).

The third smile is a consequence of the previous two. It is the smile with which I welcome other people, especially those I live with and work with. Showing affection and without giving too much importance to possible mistakes or rubbings. With a cheerful face, mother Teresa of Calcutta, receiving the Nobel prize surprised the public by making this suggestion: "Smile at each other, spend time to be with your families. Smile at each other".

"The dress, the smile and the way of walking reveal how each man is", says the Book of Wisdom.

The smile can truly be that sign that allows others to recognize a Christian.