



# Cardinal: Divine Love is key to the cosmos

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Blessed Antonio Rosmini, a priest and philosopher, understood that divine love was the key not only to comprehend his own life, but also to view history and the cosmos.

This was a reflection made by Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, president of the Italian bishops' conference, during a Mass celebrated Thursday in Stresa on the 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Father Rosmini (1797-1855).

Ordained a priest in 1821, he went on in 1828 to found the Institute of Charity, a religious congregation recognized in 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI.

In his homily, the cardinal reflected on the priest's life, noting how he showed that "faith, reason and the heart" are the means to dialogue with modernity and to overcome the obstacles and incomprehension dictated by secularism.

The archbishop of Genoa affirmed that "the way of encounter and dialogue with modernity is inspired by many common lights and aspirations," although it is also "fraught with obstacles and not a few deep-seated prejudices."

The way of faith, reason and the heart is the path to overcome difficulties and misunderstandings, the prelate pointed out, as Blessed Rosmini showed "through a long and constant, exciting and deeply-felt itinerary of reflection and study, but first of all of prayer and of life".

"Rosmini's experience suggests a further condition for one who believes, thinks and dialogues: humility," the cardinal said.

He noted that the priest's life "was also marked by no little sufferings and humiliations".

In 1849 ecclesiastical authorities placed two of Father Rosmini's works on the index of banned books, because of erroneous interpretations that had been promoted, despite his fidelity to Pope Pius IX. Condemned later with the doctrinal decree "*Post Obitum*" were 40 of his propositions, taken especially from posthumous works and others published in his lifetime.

It was not until July 1, 2001, that a note of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, signed by the then prefect, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, stated that "the reasons for concern" regarding the work of Antonio Rosmini were surmounted.

## **Obedience of love**

According to Cardinal Bagnasco, the way that Blessed Rosmini reacted to the initial condemnation of his works "attests to a profound humility that is translated in a more complete obedience of love".

"He accepted everything with trust," the prelate said, "until the full recognition of his writings, so much as to make Pius IX exclaim: «God be praised, who every now and then sends these men for the good of the Church»".

"We know that Rosmini's humility did not stem from a scarce awareness of himself," Cardinal Bagnasco said, "but from a life that had a center and he never moved from that center, not even in the most difficult circumstances: The center was Jesus, the awareness that he guided his life always, even when the paths seemed incomprehensible and torturous".

He added that "the example of Rosmini shows us that faith changes life at its roots".

Faith “does not take away responsibility, weights or crosses, but illumines everything with meaning and saves with mercy and with love,” the prelate added.

He continued: “No one is alone anymore. God takes care of us. Every situation becomes a place of encounter and grace, is charged with eternity and the infinite, of redemption for oneself and for the world.

“The present takes on the hue of the future and looks at the earth with the eyes of Christ; it is filled with hope”.

In this light, the cardinal noted, “man discovers himself not condemned to death but destined to life, not a vagabond going toward nothing but a pilgrim going toward the whole of love and happiness”.

For this reason, he said, it can be said that “Rosmini’s intellectual mission is a reflection of this miracle: to liberate from the darkness of error by showing the luminosity and beauty of the truth that is Christ”.

Cardinal Bagnasco concluded by repeating the words that Blessed Rosmini addressed to some religious brothers in 1851 on the eve of their vows: “Together we agree to have the charity of God in us expand according to its dimensions of loftiness toward the highest good, in breadth with the embrace of all men, in length because love is faithful, in profundity to the pain of the cross”.

*[With the contribution of Antonio Gaspari]*