

Novena for Paolo Seventh Day

From the Gospel according to Saint John

My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Jn 15:12-13

From the Sunnah

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكَيْعٌ، وَأَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -
"وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا أَوْلَا
أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمُوهُ تَحَابَبْتُمْ أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ بَيْنَكُمْ "

It was narrated that Abu Hurairah said:

“The Messenger of God (ﷺ) said: 'By the One in whose Hand is my soul! You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not (truly) believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you of something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread the greetings of peace amongst yourselves.’”

Hadith #68 from Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Book 1

Words from Paolo

The *Abdâl* are good persons in Islam. For me, they can also be good Christians. They are part of the same mystic school, the school of selfless love. For becoming an *Abdâl*, you have to work on your soul without relent. You cannot declare yourself *Abdâl*. The *Abdâl* are chosen by God for healing the wounds of the world through the gift of themselves, through patience, humility, silence and through littleness assumed in love.

Once I had the certitude to encounter one. I found myself in Homs, the chief city Mar Musa depends on, for doing some administrative papers. I was annoyed because I had just learned they wanted me to pass an exam for obtaining the residence permit in Syria. I finished this futile morning in an immense corridor in the district office where in the middle there was an iron cage for casting tax envelops. In this iron cage, I found a white man, radiant and smiling, who made everybody feel comfortable. We were all in a hurry, dripping with sweat and anxious to exit as quickly as possible this hellish place. And yet there was this angel in a cage who spoke 'love' and who said: "Come on, give it to me. But yes, of course, I will take care of it." He fostered us all, and everybody was ashamed to be so much in a rush. I wished to kiss his hand and I said to myself: "an angel in a cage who takes care of taxes". This man radiated sainthood like an *Abdâl*. He carried the burden of the world on his shoulders and like a sponge absorbed its misery, its wounds and its fatigue to give it back in light.

The *Abdâl* in Islam are hidden souls, suffering, who are united with God and who, like Abraham, are saving the world by their attitude of intercession.

Reported by Guyonne de Montjou, Mar Moussa, Paris 2006