



Annual Retreat of the General House Community

ROME, Italy - In the framework of the spiritual exercises, the General House community organized its annual retreat from Sunday, September 25th to Friday, September 30th, 2022, in the General House of the Brothers of Saint Gabriel. The retreat was facilitated by Fr. Sergio GASPARI, SMM and had as its theme **"the descent to the top"**. This is how Gregory of Nyssa defines humility. The Biblical passages that have served as support for this theme are the following: Mt 23, 12: "Whoever humbles himself will be exalted" and Lk 1, 52: "He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, he has exalted the humble" (Magnificat).

To introduce the theme, the Preacher helped us to know that in the law of physical gravity, the fall is downward; while in the law of metaphysical gravity, the fall is upwards. It belongs to the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, God exalts the humble; he overthrows the mighty from their thrones.

Then he showed us, through the writings of the Fathers of the Church and the Saints, the importance of prayer and the practice of the virtues in our life as religious and priests. He evoked here the words of Saint John Paul II who said: "priests are 'masters' of prayer". Through prayer, they lead the faithful entrusted to them back to God; they give their lives new support and new meaning. Our prayer must help us to live charity which is, as Padre Pio of Pietrelcina says, the queen of virtues. This charity is threefold: material, spiritual and cultural.

Finally, the Preacher presented the Virgin Mary to us as a model to imitate in our daily lives. According to Benedict XVI, it is the living synthesis of the gospel. The Virgin Mary teaches us to live the Word of God. Here, Fr. Sergio mentioned the numbers 152-168 of the *True Devotion to the blessed Virgin* where Father de Montfort tells us that devotion to the Virgin Mary is an easy, short, perfect and assured path. Mary leads us unimpeded to Jesus.

To close the annual retreat, there was the celebration of a thanksgiving Mass. After, there was an aperitif with the Brothers of Saint Gabriel and the Sisters. At the end came the meal. We thank the Lord for all the graces received. To Jesus through Mary.

Deacon Charles MUMBERE KIPUTSU, SMM