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FATHER VALENTINI: Two Publications on the Gospels of the Childhood of Jesus

ROME, Italy - On the 19th of January 2018 near the pontifical faculty "*Marianum*" in Rome, took place the presentation of two volumes of Father Alberto VALENTINI on the gospels of the Childhood of Jesus, published by the "Edizioni Dehoniane di Bologna": 1) *Vangelo d'infanzia secondo Matteo*, 2013; 2) *Vangelo d'Infanzia secondo Luca*, 2017. The two volumes are a pascal re-reading of the origins of Jesus. A "unicum" in the Italian biblical panorama.

Our confrere VALENTINI, a biblical scholar, after having obtained his doctorate in Biblical Sciences at the "*Biblicum*" institute of Rome in 1983, published a thesis with the title "*Il Magnificat. Genere letterario struttura e esegesi*". He also authored other publications like « *Maria, secondo le scritture. Figlia di Sion e Madre* » and a good number of articles. He has been as well a lecturer for a long time in the pontifical universities of Rome.

The rector of the Faculty, Denis KULANDAISAMY, appreciated the long collaboration of teaching of Father Valentini at Marianum faculty. He presented him as a joyful person, a friendly lecturer who is appreciated by the students. The presentation of the two volumes was done by professors Germano

SCAGLIONI ofm, Salvatore PERELLA sm and Fr. Alfio FILIPPI, Director Emeritus of des éditions dehonniennes (EDB).

The biblist Germano SCAGLIONI began by explaining that even though the first Christian preaching was concentrated on the kerygma, the question of the origins of Jesus remains always alive in the light of the resurrection. The infancy gospels are testimonies to Christ from the pascal mystery. They are the anticipations of the evangelical symphony. They are important texts to re-read in the light of the pascal mystery. On this regard, the work of Fr. Valentini was welcomed as "scholarly, balanced, and understandable".

Theologian Salvatore PERELLA sm, presented the mariological aspects of the works of father Valentini. He praises his theological effort that Mary is not in contradiction with the center of faith. The theme is very delicate and focuses on the origins of Jesus Christ, a fruit of a faith reading. Father Valentini shows that the infancy gospels have their "substantial" historical value. He affirms the centrality of the soteriology of Luke's message. The theologian concluded by saying, "Thank you Father Valentini for you have given us the fundamental instruments to give dignity to Mary in the Christ event underlines in the scriptures".

Father Alfio FILIPPI mentioned the editorial value of the two biblical volumes. Being the first reader of all the booklets of father Alberto, he became familiar with them. «Infancy Gospels» more than infancy: a choice to discover. Thanked for his professionalism in deepening, Father Valentini was faithful to the historical-critical method with theological finality. He presented a Mariology centered on Christology. In his carrier of writer, it can be said that father Valentini wrote one book in 4 volumes. Two qualities of the two volumes: they are a theological foundation on the Mariology; they show a Marian theology well rooted in the scriptures.

At last Father VALENTINI took the floor to thank and speak about the "joys" of the New Testament, magnificent works: the infancy narratives. The last borders to be crossed in the biblical studies are surely the gospels of the childhood of Jesus. The challenge was to unify them with the remaining of the Lucan work. Regarding the historical value of the narratives, father VALENTINI uses an image: there couldn't have been a celebration without facts, but the celebration is the biggest of facts. And the celebration is found in the texts itself, the way we have them today. The center of these narratives is Jesus, but Mary has a special place, underline in the biblical texts by the expression "the child and his mother". It is through Jesus that one goes to Mary; it is him who gives her all her glory. He finished in quoting Montfort: "Do you want to look at Mary? Look at whom she is a mother.

At the presentation, a wonderful Montfortian presence of the General House and of the community of Via Romagna surrounded our confrere with support and admiration. The two publications are the ripe fruits of serious years of commitment in biblical deepening, of teaching Mariology and of passionate preaching the good news.

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