



ARCIDIOCESI DI MILANO

ZONA PASTORALE QUARTA - RHO

*Il Vicario Episcopale*

Olgiate Olona, June 26, 2019

Dear sisters, dear brothers!

Today I feel that these words - "sisters and brothers" - are not words of circumstance to start a speech. These are words that I feel that are coming from the hearth and are addressed to those ones - I'm thinking about the relatives of the victims of the plane crash occurred 60 years ago - who still have an unbridgeable emptiness inside them.

A tragic fate - maybe avoidable today with the modern technologies - took away 70 human lives from the eyes of their loved ones.

First, I express my closest solidarity and - as a believer - my heartfelt prayer to the relatives of the victims. I add to these feelings those of our Archbishop, his Excellence Mons. Mario Delpini, of which I am vicar: he too is joining us in this moment of memory and prayer.

1) Memory: very important word! People that have no memory, they have no present nor future. Remembering a tragic event of the past aims to revive inside all of us that human closeness that, otherwise, makes us unable to experience real solidarity. This is the reason why I want to express my thanks to the committee and all the institutions who have kept this memory alive in these 60 years. My sisters and brothers, anyone of us or someone of our loved ones could have been aboard that airplane! Today, our society shows signs of distance from the events of human beings simply because - in an aura of selfishness - we think that those facts do not touch us. Instead today we are here to confirm that every pain is part of the pain of humanity; no pain can and must be foreign to us. Keeping the memory alive means remembering the profound dignity of the human being: none of us is an island. You, all of us belong to each other. Pain has no color, no country of origin, no specific passport: the pain and therefore this pain that we commemorate today, belongs to all, all the humanity. It must be kept as a precious heritage because it has the ability to make us equal, sisters and brothers indeed! This is the power of memory that death has no right to scratch. Every name of that plane crash is my name, our name, everyone's name.

2) Prayer: for a believer, prayer is everything but also it honors those who do not believe. In fact, prayer is expressed not only in words but it is even more precious when it is silence, it unites believers and non-believers. For me, a Christian, being here to pray, with this Eucharist of suffrage for these 70 souls, means to nourish a hope. The hope lies in the words of Jesus that we have just heard: "*In the house of my Father there are many dwelling places. I go to prepare a place for you, because where I am, there you may be also*". Today I pray with all the strength of my heart for these 70 souls because I have the certainty that they are now with the Lord. For me, a Christian, death has no right to put an end to anything. I have this certainty of faith in prayer for the sisters and brothers who lost their lives on that tragic June 26 of 60 years ago. But I have this certainty of faith in the Resurrection of Jesus for every woman or man who dies. For every drop of pain fallen from the heart of every human being. For every tear that plows the face of those who suffer. And without differences in culture, origin or religion.

Dear sisters and brothers, we are here to remember and pray. From that tragic fatal event that shook this earth 60 years ago, our memory and our prayer spread to every disaster, to every tragedy, to every tragic event. And it commits us to be men and women of peace who revolt when humanity no longer wants to remember, when men want to forget and think - wrongly - only of themselves. If we really want to leave the world better than we found it, there is nothing more beautiful than being sisters and brothers. Like we do today! May the blessing of our Archbishop and also mine reach you.

Your episcopal vicar monsignor Luca Raimondi

