

CANONISATION/ POPE'S HOMILY

Frassati and Acutis: an invitation to young people to 'orient their lives upwards'

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Eighty thousand people attended, filling the Olympic Stadium in Rome to capacity. Except yesterday, the first Sunday in September, which felt more like August due to the heat, St Peter's Square was not hosting a big match, but celebrating the canonisation of

two new saints.

Born 90 years apart, Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis were both canonised by Pope Leo XIV, who recited the formula beginning with 'ad honorem Sanctæ et Individuæ Trinitatis, ad exaltationem fidei catholicæ et vitæ Christianæ incrementum' from the square. Thus, 'in honour of the Holy Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the growth of the Christian faith', the two individuals, who died at the young ages of 24 and 15 in 1925 and 2006 respectively, were entered into the register of saints.

The Pope knew that this would be a memorable day, and before Mass began, he described it spontaneously as 'a beautiful celebration for all Italy, for the whole Church, and for the whole world'. He then recalled that holiness is not a luxury reserved for the few, but that 'all of you, all of us, are also called to be saints.' Addressing the many young people present in the square in particular, the Pope said, 'We all feel in our hearts the same thing that Pier Giorgio and Carlo experienced: this love for Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist, but also in the poor and in our brothers and sisters.'

In his homily, the Pope described them as 'a young man from the early 20th century and a teenager of our times, both in love with Jesus and ready to give everything for him'. For Leone, Frassati's life still represents 'a light for lay spirituality' today. Using the example of the new saint, the Pope reiterated a concept he had recently expressed in a speech to a delegation of French politicians. 'For him,' Prevost recalled, 'faith was not a private devotion. Driven by the power of the Gospel and his involvement in ecclesial associations, he generously dedicated himself to society, contributed to political life and devoted himself ardently to serving the poor.'

This is a 'slap in the face' to those who boast about keeping their faith exclusively private, such as the mayor of Genoa and new star of Italian progressivism, Silvia Salis, who yesterday declared herself 'Catholic in private' in an interview with La Stampa.

Regarding Acutis, on the other hand, the Pope emphasised his encounter with Jesus through his family and the sacraments. The papal homily extensively quoted the London-born young man on his relationship with the Eucharist, much to the chagrin of the ultra-Bergogliian theologian Andrea Grillo, who was publicly disavowed by his Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo for criticising the new saint.

Prevost spoke of the illnesses that afflicted the two former blesseds, recalling that 'even this did not stop them from loving, offering themselves to God, blessing him, and praying to him for themselves and everyone.' For the Augustinian pope, 'Saints Pier

Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are an invitation to all of us, especially young people, not to waste our lives, but to direct them upwards and make them a masterpiece.'

They are also the first saints of his pontificate.

This was a special canonisation, as the parents and siblings of one of the two saints participated in the ceremony. The Acutis family presented the gifts for the Offertory and Michele, Carlo's brother who was born four years after his death, read the first lesson in the piazza. This brings to mind the precedent of 24 June 1950, when Maria Goretti's mother Assunta and her brothers were present among the 300,000 faithful for her canonisation. This joy was only briefly experienced in the 17th century by Marta Tana, whose son Luigi Gonzaga was beatified shortly before her death.