

Every year the feast of St. Anne is a braid of important old values with always new ones.

In the magnificence of wheat " we grow and look after" the garden of the world

Pastoral letter in honor of St. Anne, great mother of the harvest, protector and co-patron Saint of Jelsi- CB

An ancient heart that is still beating, thrills, raises and calls from far, even immigrants overseas and activates new synergies with the "school of braids" which involves the small ones and the "school of floats" which involves children and young people and many families. And then there are the *traglie*, that are the traditional symbol of the feast. The *traglie* have their own "rural" heart, their origin is in the religious fruit of the earth and specifically in the wheat, the first fruit offered to Saint Anne, mother of the harvest, to the Giver of each gift.

The feast starts officially each year on the harvesting Sunday, this year at Toro (CB) with the participation of many *jelsesi* and non and the hard-working **reapers of Lupara**. In the name of the grain they live spiritually sharing the joy, singing and thanking the Lord, who gives fruits to the Earth and rewards every expectation and desire also the unexpressed ones. The feast is the occasion of new relationships between towns and expresses the identity and cohesion of the community, in the spirit of membership, in the spirit of strength, of moral values sharing the care of a common territory and the enhancement of its resources. **The humble grain becomes golden spike and praises in the heart of everyone.** And *"if at Jelsi the wheat becomes art donated for Saint Anne, at Gildone the fragrant bread in honor of S. Heart and St. Anthony of Padua becomes a gift for all"*. This is the gift that every year we celebrate the 2th July, in twinning with the community of Gildone (CB) at Casalvecchio of Puglia (FG) because of the common veneration of the saint patron, the Virgin Mary of Grace. On the large and immense Dauni hills smelling the fragrance of the wheat non completely reaped and between the crops of coriander and alimentary and textile hemp, I gathered the intuition of this letter that I wish abundant, as the golden spikes collected in sheaves, for further inspiration and new paths. All this because the grain, symbol of our heart, "believes" that will rise again from the Mother Earth that embraces, that guards and gives new life! And only those who believe, today, will plant at full hands! Here is the deep meaning of the 213th Feast of Jelsi, "Town of wheat". The same should be our heart, open as a generous gift! Especially for those who **love the Earth and defend it** as the recent fights and manifestations (such as did the committee of moms Samnites, " Civic committee for compliance and the protection of the

territory" strongly supported by the population, by the priest, and by Msgr. G. Bregantini together with the Bishop of Benevento) to obtain the suspension till 9/1/2019 of the big garbage dump (of 22mils tons year) that the "Camorra" would like to build in Pianelle area close to Sassinoro (BN). How can we avoid "Mammona" to win today with its dirty speculation and turn off the beauty of creation? What should be done because the suspension of the Council of State, which has asked "an additional examination " deletes the authorization? what should be done to overcome the silence often reported by Don Maurizio Patriciello who denounced various times the scandal of "the land of fires"? The wheat becomes hope, cohesion and fight for what is **right, what is true, what is beautiful, what is clean, what is healthy** and to put in the middle not economic interests but the real humanity, the dignity of the person and preciousness of LIFE. **Together the roots become stronger and united in struggle we win!** In prayers the tormented hearts (and servants of modern idols) mend their ways, the worthy motivation emerges and the struggle is cancelled. With our heart we present to the mother saint Anne the great prayer because **everyone becomes guardian of creation**. "Until will last for the Earth, seeds and masses, cold and hot summer and winter day and night, not will cease" (Gen 8,22). "With these words - writes Cardinal G. Bassetti- the Writ indicates, in the alternation of time, of seasons, a sign of the stability of the real, which is guaranteed by the loyalty of God". Today we are called to ask ourselves and to act urgently (as we will listen in September to the message for the day of the Custody of Creation) for the crisis and climate change, for the widespread pollution, towards the dramas of which are victims many people forced to get migrants. As the Message remembers: "the challenge does not involve only the economy and policy: there is also a pastoral perspective to find, **taking in charge sympathetically the environmental weaknesses** concerning the impacts of changes in a perspective of integral care". we have to ask ourselves and act, starting from the spiritual perspective that is from caring the inner life to know how to store the common house; the inner life makes room for the praise, for thanksgiving, for listening, for contemplation, for wonder. The nature fascinates us with small and large beauties! With Saint Anne we are invited to "**grow and guard**" **the garden of the World** (see Gen 2,15). "While *to cultivate* means plowing or working the land, *to keep* means to protect, cure, preserve, store, watch. This implies a report of responsible reciprocity between human being and nature" (Pope Francis, Laudato Si, encyclical on care for our common home n. 67) to ensure fertility in the future. We would like to greet gratefully His Holiness Louis Raphael Sako, patriarch Chaldean of Baghdad-Iraq- (who visited us during the feast of

Saint Anne 2015), now Cardinal, and say a fervent prayer, renewed in the name of the offered wheat, that through Saint Anne becomes hope for Iraq, for Syria and the middle East. Everything should be done in the name of a constant dialogue and commitment for peace. With the hope to strengthen Christian unity, raise the principle of citizenship as a common element to all Iraqis and support the reconstruction after the war and the jihadist violence. **Saint Anne and Saint Joachim teach us to give our heart to God and not only cuttings of our spare time**, to find the pride **of belonging to a story** that is celebrated by the community and feeds the faith; **the care of our territories** responsibly guarding and cultivating our land, not as masters of life but as bearers of a received gift which has to be given to the generations of tomorrow, the uniqueness of the **wonder** to seize the depth of life, the preciousness of the **braiding** of hearts that love and working hands that build; to help us orienting towards **responsible lifestyle and consumption** and towards choices forward-looking with the eyes and the mind of young people, joined to the force of adults and the wisdom of the elderly. The beloved Saints will give us the **taste of the prayer** as food for the life of the spirit, in order to understand and accept God's will in every act, to meet Christ, listen and go towards him. And even more to sing with our life the love that **God brings us** and through us, because we are simple tools, we are humble creatures that God always surprises and performs its wonders! Beloved Saint Anne teach us that God, traveler through the centuries and connoisseur of our hearts, come to us as a **seed** that becomes a tree, as a grain that becomes a multiple spike, as **yeast** that raises the dough, as a **scent** of life for life, and so you see the heavens reflections in a drop of dew, the path of God in the dust of the streets. And if you don't see it, and his steps seem slow, He arrives and walks on every way. The world is full of its tracks!

Jelsi (CB): 26.7.2018

The Parish: Don Peppino Cardegna

With the greetings and best wishes of the Archbishop Giancarlo M. Bregantini