

8. October 2019

„Contemplative attitude“

Lk 10, 38-42

In the course of their journey he came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now Martha, who was distracted with all the serving, came to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered, 'Martha, Martha,' he said, 'you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better part, and it is not to be taken from her.'

We know this section from the Holy Scripture very well and follow the general interpretation that associates Mary's behavior with the more contemplative life, while Martha is more associated with active life. The Lord has preferred the way of Mary in this situation.

In fact, Mary has better understood the situation of Jesus' presence because in his presence it is necessary to listen and be gifted by the Lord. When we see Mary sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to him, we receive a very valuable instruction for our spiritual life. It is not primarily our actions and our efforts that connect us more deeply with the Lord, but that attitude to absorb all that he wants to give us.

Let's think, for example at the sacred places of a church. There, in the tabernacle, the Lord lives in the mystery of his Eucharistic presence. How do we receive this gift? We will soon realize that this requires silence and an open heart. In the silence before the tabernacle, the Lord can speak to us and touch our hearts in this way. Any unnecessary speaking and loud behavior disturbs this inner retreat, does not let us take the situation as it then becomes fruitful.

In a contemplative behavior, which is a more receptive attitude, we minimize our often purely natural actions and give God more space. In this way we become more receptive to God's presence, which we can discover and perceive everywhere in a more contemplative attitude.

How can we grow into such an attitude?

An important way is to learn to use the language properly. Often we are inflamed by a way of speaking that simply expresses our feelings and thoughts and does not know the language of silence anymore. So it is easy to lose the perception of when it is appropriate to listen and when it is right to speak for yourself.

Today's example clearly shows us the priority of listening to the Lord. Jesus speaks and we listen. We need to learn to curb our urge to communicate and not always comment on everything we hear and see. Care must be taken that we do not pay too much attention to earthly things. They are transient, while the word of God is not (*cf. Mt 24,35*).

In our Catholic Church we are in danger of losing a great value without being aware of it. It is the silence in the church that signifies an attitude of respect and love before the mysterious presence of the Lord in the Tabernacle. Unfortunately, this is nearly everywhere, as we have seen on our missionary journeys. The sacred spaces are diminished by unnecessary words in their quiet dignity.

Therefore, my concrete suggestion to all who follow the daily meditations: Let's stop talking unnecessary words in the church, and that we do not deal in the temples with the communication systems, which draw our attention . Let us consciously deal with the Word, so that our churches will be places of silence, of listening to God and of praise.

This proposal is simple and practicable and can be very important if we then help others to regain the silence. Let us remain in front of the tabernacle, let us receive the word of God and sit down at the feet of Jesus.

The Lord will then say to us that we have chosen „*the better part*“ and express his joy that we have time for him.