



**18. January 2020**

**“Love and truth”**

**Mk 2, 13- 17**

*He went out again to the shore of the lake; and all the people came to him, and he taught them. As he was walking along he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him. When Jesus was at dinner in his house, a number of tax collectors and sinners were also sitting at table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many of them among his followers. When the scribes of the Pharisee party saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard this he said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'*

A very central word of the Lord is presented to us today, which we have to recall and deepen again and again. The Church is sent to the sick and sinners! This remains her task until the end of time.

While the people of Israel had to separate themselves from other peoples, so as not to be stained by their sins or infected by their errors, the coming of Jesus changed this situation. This was difficult for the scribes to understand. But the Lord gives them an answer, to help them understand the new reality.

From now on, with the coming of the Lord, the mission changes.

In the power of God, the Church searches for people to proclaim the love of God to them. She knows she has been sent by her Lord! Heroic were and are often the missionaries who, under the most difficult circumstances, proclaim the Gospel and take care of the infirmities of the people!

It is necessary to continue to deepen our own conversion, so that sin may dominate us less and less on our ways, and thus the work of the Holy Spirit may be stronger. Other people who are still entangled in sin, or perhaps do not even realize what sin means, need our authentic witness in word, deeds and being. Let us remember how disappointing it is when good words, sometimes even fiery words, are spoken, but the life testimony differs greatly from them!

The Lord seeks men, to give himself to them. He enters into the life of a sinner and leads him to repentance. So we as Christians do not separate ourselves from the sinner for whom Jesus gave his life, but we separate ourselves from sin. It is God, in his mercy and in his desire to save, who calls man to conversion and to a change of life. And we try to point out the way that leads to the Lord, so that others can also be freed from the trap of sin.

Today, unfortunately, there is a tendency in some circles of the Church not to be fully aware of the destructive power of sin. Attempts are made to appreciate and discover positive aspects in relationships that are in themselves disordered. And the consequence of this is that one gets to the point of forgetting the objective sinful situation, in which people find themselves, and from which they should get out. A strong and one-sided emphasis on positive elements in a sinful relationship relativizes the real drama of the remoteness from God of such a path (take, for example, an extramarital sexual relationship or a homosexual relationship) and the danger to the soul, apart from the fact that every sin is a rejection of God's love.

In the encounter with the adulterous woman, Jesus shows us how we should deal with sinners. He does not accuse her, does not throw stones at her, but exhorts her to leave the way of sin (*cf. Jn 8,3-11*).

Jesus comes to save in an attitude of love. This means a fundamental affection for man, a fundamental yes to us. In the following of Christ we are called to the same attitude. Let us try to meet people as God meets us, as the Lord treats the adulterous woman: in love and in truth. This means that we should not judge the sinner; but we should make him see what God's will is, and help him, as far as we can, to turn away from evil ways and enter the paths of salvation. Neither should we despise the sinner, nor relativise sin... Love and truth!