

30. January 2020

“To confess courageously our faith!”

Mk 4, 21-25

At that time Jesus said to the crowd: Do you light a lamp and put a vessel over it or put it under the bed? Do you not put it on the candlestick? There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing secret that will not come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear! He said, 'Pay attention to what you hear. According to the measure by which you measure and distribute, it will be distributed to you, and even more will be given to you. For to him that hath, to him shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. He also said to them, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under a tub or under the bed? Surely to be put on the lamp-stand? For there is nothing hidden, but it must be disclosed, nothing kept secret except to be brought to light. Anyone who has ears for listening should listen! 'He also said to them, 'Take notice of what you are hearing. The standard you use will be used for you - and you will receive more besides; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has.'

What Jesus wants to tell us here is clear! Faith in God is not a private matter, it is not of an esoteric and hidden character, so that it should not be made public! When Jesus says: *"I am the light of the world"* (Jn 8,12) -and in fact He is!- then this light should shine before all people. If we ourselves live in this light, we give witness to the "Light of the world," which has come from God to call men into his Kingdom.

As Christians, we cannot allow ourselves to be intimidated when around us there is less and less interest in knowing God, or even when there is a reaction of hostility towards Him. Often, before persecution begins, the Christian proclamation is relegated to the private sphere. And after having tried this, the faith and the believers are attacked and persecuted directly.

Here it is important to deal wisely with the entrusted message, without ever forgetting that we must confess Jesus before men so that He may confess us before the angels (*cf. Lk 12,8*). This also applies to our Christian values, such as purity, the indissolubility of marriage, the protection of life from conception to natural death, among many others.

How can people accept the faith if it is not announced to them? Who more than us will speak to our children of the overwhelming love of our Heavenly Father? Who will console the sad? Who will satisfy the hunger of those who are in search of the truth? Who will bring the light of faith to the nations, but those who, even in the most difficult circumstances, are witnesses of Christ?

The light must be put on the lamp-stand - this is what Jesus teaches us today. Let us not be afraid to bear witness to Him! Let us listen very carefully to what the Word of God wants to tell us today, and try to put it into practice in our lives.

In this way, the following word that Jesus tells us in this context will also be fulfilled: *"According to the measure by which you measure and distribute, it will be distributed to you, and even more will be given to you"*.

Jesus wants to make it clear to us that when we give ourselves completely to God and, in Him, to people, we will be given more and more by Him. We can easily apply this to the concepts of light and love. The more we receive the light of the Lord, that is, receive Himself; live with Him and also testify to Him, the more His light will grow in us.

If, on the other hand, we take only very little care of God, we will also receive very little. If we give little to people, we will also receive little.

This teaching of Jesus will become even clearer if we apply it to the concept of love. If we receive God's love and give it also to others, then the love will grow. God gives us so much; he distributes his love so generously that his only limit is our capacity to receive it. Therefore, the more our heart is broadened in this love, the more we will be able to receive it and be imbued with it.

The same thing happens when we share that love: it will never diminish; on the contrary, it will grow! On the other hand, if we keep it to ourselves, we run the risk of losing our love, of the heart becoming cold, seeking only itself. Then we have not understood the essence of love and light, which tend to spread and want to illuminate and warm everything!

So, today Jesus clearly invites us to make fruitful the gift of faith that has been entrusted to us. Each one of us can ask himself what this means concretely in his life. We can love God without limits, seek him with our whole being and remain with him without reserve. We can also love people profoundly in God and in God's way, but the measure of our surrender to them must be in accordance with what

corresponds to a creature, to a brother or sister; and it cannot be the same measure of giving ourselves to God.

Now, what can we do if we still have a cold heart, if we are slow to do good, if we actually want to love, but simply do not put things into practice and then are disappointed in ourselves and become discouraged?

Then let us start from where we are! In the midst of all our limitations and weakness, let us make a declaration of our love for God and give our neighbor - even if only a small step is possible - a gesture of affection.

God knows us very well and appreciates the effort we make for Him. We are not perfect! Let us ask the Lord to warm our cold heart; to help us overcome our laziness. Let us lament before Him that we would like to love more than we do, that we would like to be a greater light than we are, and beg Him to help us!

God will then look at our intention and will not despise the plea we make to Him in our weakness!

So let us pay close attention today, as Jesus advises us in the Gospel, and let us set out to serve the One who is the Light of the world, and, in Him, to become light ourselves.