



**28. January 2021**

**“The light is to be placed on the lampstand”**

Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas

*Mk 4:21-25*

*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, not an esoteric matter that should not come out into the open. When Jesus says: “*I am the light of the world*” (Jn 8:12) - and He is - then this light should shine before all people. If we ourselves live in this light, then the “light of the world” will testify that God has come to call people into his kingdom.

As Christians, we must not allow ourselves to be intimidated when our environment wants to know less and less about God or even behaves in a hostile manner. Often, persecution is preceded by a desire to push the Christian message into the private sphere before persecuting the faith and the believers.

It is important to handle the entrusted message wisely and never forget that we also have to confess Jesus before men, so that Christ also confesses us before the angels (cf. Mt 10:32-33). This also applies to Christian values, such as purity, the indissolubility of marriage, the protection of life from beginning to end, and much more.

How is faith supposed to be accepted by people if it is not proclaimed to them? Who will tell our children about the overwhelming love of our heavenly Father if not us? Who gives comfort to those who mourn? Who satisfies the hunger of those who seek the truth? Who brings the light of faith to the nations in times of decline if not those who are witnesses of Christ even in the most difficult circumstances?

The light is to be placed on the lampstand, so Jesus sets it before us today. Let us not be afraid to witness to him! So let us listen carefully to what the Word of God wants to say to us today and try to integrate it into our concrete lives!

In this way, the further word that Jesus gives us in this context also comes true:

*“The standard you use will be used for you”*

Jesus wants to make it clear to us that if we give ourselves wholly to God and in God to men, more and more will be given to us by Him. We can easily translate this into the concepts of light and love.

The more we receive the light of the Lord, that is, Himself, live with Him and also witness to Him, the more the light of God will grow in us.

If, on the other hand, we care little for God, we will also receive little. If we give little to people, we will also receive little.

It becomes even clearer when we think of love: if we receive God's love and give it to others, love will grow. God gives us an infinite amount, he gives away his love to the extent that we can receive it. But if our heart expands in this love, then it also becomes bigger and bigger, more and more receptive, more and more permeated by this love.

It is the same when we give this love to others: it does not become less, but more and more. But if we keep it to ourselves, then we are in danger of losing this love, because our heart becomes cold, confines itself only to itself. But this does not recognise the essence of love and light, because both radiate and make everything bright and warm.

So Jesus clearly invites us today to let the good of faith entrusted to us become fruitful. Everyone can easily check what this means for his or her life. In relation to God, we can love without limit, truly seek Him and stay with Him without any limitation!

People we can love very deeply in God and love in the way of God, but we can only give ourselves to them to the extent of loving a creature, a brother and sister, and not to the same extent as we can give ourselves to God.

But what do we do when our heart is still cold, when we are sluggish to do good, when we actually want to love but just don't make things happen and then become disappointed in ourselves and despondent?

Then we simply break away from where we are, make a declaration of love to God in all our weakness and limitedness and give our neighbour - even if perhaps only a small step is possible - a gesture of affection.

God knows us intimately and appreciates it when we reach out to Him. We are not perfect.

Let us ask the Lord to warm our cold hearts, to overcome our sluggishness. 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 then looks at our intention and will not evade such petitions as we make to him in our weakness.

So let us listen carefully today, as Jesus advises us, and continue on our way to serve the light of the world and to become light in him!