

10. July 2021

“Proclaiming the Gospel with Boldness”

Mt 10: 24-33

'Disciple is not superior to teacher, nor slave to master. It is enough for disciple to grow to be like teacher, and slave like master. If they have called the master of the house "Beelzebul", how much more the members of his household? 'So do not be afraid of them. Everything now covered up will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops. 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell .Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. 'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of human beings, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of human beings, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

The whole gospel is full of the message that we should not be afraid; but only fear God in the proper way. However, the Lord does not hide from his disciples the great dangers that await them. And, indeed, they witnessed all that the Lord had to suffer. Jesus encourages us not to be troubled by those dangers that relate to our bodily dimension (such as persecutions, enmities, etc.), for these are only of a temporary nature.

We should keep in mind that in this passage the Lord is speaking to those who come following Him, those who have entered into a communion of life with Him and want to imitate Him. In them, the close and trusting relationship with God that is offered to all mankind, is already realised. To them the Lord considers them capable of sharing also in the suffering that is connected with following him: *“Disciple is not superior to teacher, nor slave to master. It is enough for disciple to grow to be like teacher, and slave like master”* -he tells them.

The following of Christ is not compatible with a fearful hiding; with avoiding all human contact; with fleeing from every difficulty; with seeking to be the favourite of all... The following of Christ must be sustained by the humble awareness that one is sent, by trust in God and the courage to proclaim the truth without fear. For

truth is not only a private matter; the message of the gospel must reach all people. Therefore, we must properly oppose any attempt by a government to "relegate the faith to the sacristies".

But courage does not mean recklessness, nor does it mean to set aside necessary precautions. Rather, the courage that today's Gospel asks of us is that which, being aware of the dangers, knows how to face them in a supernatural attitude. Here we must keep in mind the trust in God, on which today's text insists so much. God knows everything, He knows every situation, nothing happens without His consent... The disciple must rely on this certainty! His security is in God and in the fulfilment of his will. From this comes the strength and humility necessary to proclaim the Word of the Lord and not to put his personal opinions in the foreground.

Now, if we bring Christ's ever-present charge to our time, we will certainly notice that it is necessary to use every means to convey the message of the Gospel. We must bear in mind that it is a message intended for all people, including those of other religions. While we must recognise the truth-oriented values that can be discovered in other religions and the religious fervour we may find in their members (as the Second Vatican Council's Declaration "Nostra Aetate" suggests), a fortiori we are called to make the beauty of the Gospel shine forth, so that all people may see the light in its fullness.

"What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops top." -the Lord tells us. This can mean nothing other than the fact that we cannot withhold the truth of the gospel. This counts both for that time and for our time. This world, which is surrounded by increasing darkness, is in dire need of the clear and truthful testimony of the gospel, which cannot in any way covenant with the world, for then it would lose its flavour and its strength. Thanks to modern means of communication, we can proclaim the gospel "from the rooftops" to all parts of the world. The handling of these media must certainly be done in the Spirit of God, without being trapped by the power of attraction that they exert, so that the message is not trivialised.