

11. October 2021

The sign of the Lord and His Church

Lk 11:29-32

'The crowds got even bigger and he addressed them, 'This is an evil generation; it is asking for a sign. The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be a sign to this generation. On Judgement Day the Queen of the South will stand up against the people of this generation and be their condemnation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, look, there is something greater than Solomon here. On Judgement Day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and, look, there is something greater than Jonah here.'

If we were to try to apply this gospel passage to the present situation, perhaps we could say that also the people of this time, at least those who are still searching for the truth, would like to see a sign through which they could recognise what the truth is.

How would the Lord respond to this request? Would He perhaps say that the sign has already been given, which consisted in His coming into the world and the building up of His Catholic Church? Would He perhaps tell us that this is where we can recognise the truth? Possibly that would be His answer...

I personally began to search for truth at a certain age in my life. By the grace of God, I was allowed to meet the Lord, and from that moment on I knew that I had found the One who can say of Himself that He is the Truth (Jn 14:6).

Some decades have passed since then... After this first encounter, I asked my Lord where His true Church was. He answered my question, leading me to the Catholic Church.

Now, truth is not simply a subjective impression; it is the full realisation of the reality that comes from God, especially in the supernatural dimension. While it is true that recognising the truth was for me a grace that God granted me - for which I will never tire of thanking Him - this truth exists objectively and is at the disposal of each individual person.

So there is a clear sign that God has erected, and there is no need to keep asking for signs... How much responsibility we Catholics have for the fact that we know the Lord and belong to His Church! And how painful it is to see how the splendour of the truth that emanates from the Church is being progressively overshadowed! Perhaps some

Catholics find it difficult to understand how deep this pain can be, nor are they aware of the great harm caused by this obscuring of the truth.

I would now like to quote an extract from a book by Dietrich von Hildebrand, which describes very well some of what is happening in the Church today. The quotation is taken from the chapter "False Irenicism" in the book "Trojan Horse in The City of God".

I ask for a little patience with regard to the intellectual language used by the author. But his reflections are so valuable that I would like to pass them on as he formulated them:

Take, for example, what he tells us about the so-called 'false irenism', which is spreading among not a few Catholics. It is an erroneous love of peace, a false understanding of unity, which puts the question of truth in the background for the sake of peace or a supposed unity.

"False irenicism is found not only among those who are unable or unwilling to see the threat to the Church in the secularism and apostasy that abounds in the ranks of the progressive Catholics. Many who see the danger within the Church believe that it is somehow uncharitable to unmask them... We may take St. Augustine as our model, whose fight against Pelagianism was always permeated by charity for the heretic... True charity absolute requires the killing of the error."

False irenicism is motivated by a misconceived charity at the service of a meaningless unity.

It laces unity above truth. Having severed the essential link between charity and defense of the truth, irenicism is more concerned with reaching a unity with all men than with leading them to Christ and His eternal truth. It ignores the fact that real unity can be reached only in truth. Our Lord prayer "that they may be one" implies being one in Him and must not be separated from His word in John:

"In all truth I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a bandit. (...) I am the gate of the sheepfold (...). Anyone who enters through me will be safe (...) there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and I must lead these too. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, one shepherd." (Jn 10:1-16)"

I quote these extracts bearing in mind the fact that in our Church there is hardly any official rejection of error. Evidently there is a fear of doing so, or a mistaken view of the harm caused by error. Thus the poison of error has been able to spread even in the highest circles of the Church, which is tragic and weakens the souls of the faithful!

Unity cannot be placed above truth. One cannot claim to achieve ecumenism and at the same time deny the doctrinal differences that still exist. One cannot engage in interreligious dialogue and relativise even in the slightest the exclusivity of Our Lord. May our Holy Church be strengthened in the truth entrusted to her, so that she may radiate the splendour of truth!

For this, it is necessary for the Holy Spirit to work a genuine purification, so that people can identify the sign in which they will obtain salvation.