

23. April 2022

Concrete and applied faith

Mk 16:9-15

Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. She then went to those who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told them. But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him. After this, he showed himself under another form to two of them as they were on their way into the country. These went back and told the others, who did not believe them either. Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused to believe thos; proclaim the gospel to all creation.

Again we see how important faith is for the Lord, especially in His disciples. Let us remember that faith is a theological virtue. When we embrace it and live in it, God's plan of salvation for us can unfold. But as much as faith is a gift, it is we, with our will, who must accept it and put it into practice. If this were not the case, it would not have been right for the Lord to rebuke the disciples for "*for their incredulity and obstinacy*" and "*because they did not believe those who had seen him risen*". And if there were no participation in our faith, much less would Jesus have said: "*Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.*" (Mk 16:16)

We see, then, that the growth of our faith also depends on us; and it is certainly not only a question of faith on a general level, that is, faith that enables us to know the truth, but also of concrete faith in the presence of God, in His real action and intervention in human history and in our personal lives. Therefore, we would do well to ask for a strong faith and to put it into daily practice, recognising how God acts day by day in us and around us. When we have had an experience of faith, we should internalise it, so that it marks us - if possible even our unconscious - as tangible proof of God's action. And then we must apply this experience concretely, remembering it and keeping it in mind when we are in the next situation that requires an act of faith.

We can see how important faith is when we consider all the promises the Lord makes to those who believe: *"In my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover."* (Mk 16:17-18). These promises count not only for the apostles, but for all those who, through them, have received the faith. And that is us! You and me!

We have received the faith through the witness of the Church, and now we are sent to pass on the message of salvation. If our faith is strong enough, signs will also happen to confirm and accredit our testimony.

Let us ask the Lord that He, with the power of the Holy Spirit, may strengthen our fainthearted and often unbelieving hearts, so that our faith may not be smaller than that of the first Christians and of all those who gave their lives for it. Today more than ever, the world is in need of our witness. Even in the Church, faith seems to be weakening more and more.

Let us not forget that for faith to be effective, it must be put into practice and applied concretely. Otherwise, we are in danger of living our everyday life only in our natural logic and experience, without understanding it in the light of faith and living it in that perspective.