

13. July 2023

The urgency of proclaiming the Gospel

NOTE: Since in recent years I have already meditated on most of the biblical texts of the liturgical calendar, I sometimes have recourse to the readings of the traditional calendar when it comes to passages that are very important to me. The Gospel I have chosen today, taken from the Votive Mass for the Propagation of the Faith, is one of them, since it deals with a very topical theme, as I will point out towards the end of this meditation.

Mt 9:35-38

'Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and all kinds of illness. And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest.'

There is nothing more important for mankind than to receive the proclamation of the Gospel, to embrace it and to live it. For this purpose, the Heavenly Father sent his only-begotten Son into the world, to carry out the work of salvation and redeem humanity on the Cross. Subsequently, the Lord entrusted the continuation of this mission to his apostles. With great fidelity and at the price of untold fatigue and sacrifice, the missionaries placed their lives at the service of evangelization, going to the ends of the earth in the name of the Lord to proclaim and make known to men that they had a Savior, who had come into the world for them. By the grace of God, many people embraced the faith and were converted thanks to the preaching of the missionaries.

This mission of the Church has not yet concluded. Until the end of time it is necessary to proclaim the Gospel and to teach people to observe all that the Lord has commanded us, according to what the Risen Lord commanded his disciples (Mt 28:19-20).

All faithful Catholics will agree with me: men need the proclamation of the Gospel, they need shepherds to lead them to the good pastures and protect them from the wolves: *"When Jesus saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd."*

Is the zeal to proclaim the Gospel unconditionally still alive in the Church? Are we still convinced that only Jesus alone can bring salvation and that every human being should know about it?

Certainly, there are still clerics and faithful with apostolic zeal, who still have that longing in their hearts and allow themselves to be moved by the Spirit of God to bring the Gospel in every possible way. We can be grateful for every Catholic who prays for the spread of the faith and bears witness; as well as for every priest and bishop who is aware of this mission of the Lord and does everything possible to fulfill it.

Unfortunately, however, there are also other tendencies that reach the highest echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Time and again I have alluded to this problem, both in my conferences and in my daily meditations. A spirit of relativism has penetrated the Church. In the Abu Dhabi Declaration, co-signed by Pope Francis and Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb on February 4, 2019, the Christian faith was de facto placed on an equal footing with other religions, saying that *"The pluralism and the diversity of religions, (...) are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human"* Although the Pope made a slight correction to this statement in response to the concern of Monsignor Athanasius Schneider, he did not introduce this modification in the official document, so that it continues to be taught in universities and seminaries with this problematic statement.

However, this equating of all religions does not correspond to the truth of the Gospel nor to the perennial doctrine of the Church. With this tendency, the proclamation of the Gospel loses its relevance, since it is no longer considered indispensable for the salvation of souls. For those who are interested in deepening their understanding of the Abu Dhabi Declaration, I recommend listening to this lecture: https://spiritustv.com/watch/conferencia-3-secunda-herida-la-declaración-de-abu-dhabi_uFrfLhGQUlxGmHu.html.

Next, I would like to show with a current example how far this spirit of relativism can go:

In September, Pope Francis will create 21 new cardinals. Among them is an auxiliary bishop of Lisbon, Monsignor Américo Aguiar, who was in charge of World

Youth Day in August this year. In an interview he recently gave to RTP Noticias, he made the following statements:

"Enjoy being together. At the end, we hold hands and say: 'I think differently, I feel differently, I organise my life differently, but we are brothers and we are going to build the future together'. This is the main message of this encounter with the living Christ that the Pope wants to give to young people. We do not want to convert young people to Christ, to the Catholic Church. None of that, absolutely not"

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case, but is in line with the current Pontificate. But the message of the Gospel, to which we the faithful must adhere, remains unchanged:

"Jesus came and said to them: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time'" (Mt 28:18-20).

And St. Paul, in his concern for the churches, writes in his Letter to the Galatians:

"Not that it is another gospel; except that there are trouble-makers among you who are seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven preaches to you a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let God's curse be on him." (Gal 1:7-8).

Therefore, let us pray not only that the Lord will send out labourers into his harvest, but also that those who are called will not be discouraged. The Lord will listen to us, if we ask him to send good shepherds, who proclaim the Gospel without cutting corners and do not let themselves and others be confused.