



14. July 2023

## The sound doctrine

NOTE: In the traditional calendar, St. Bonaventure is celebrated today. We will therefore listen to the reading of his memorial:

2 Tim 4:1-8

*Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I charge you, in the name of his appearing and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement - but do all with patience and with care to instruct. The time is sure to come when people will not accept sound teaching, but their ears will be itching for anything new and they will collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes; and then they will shut their ears to the truth and will turn to myths. But you must keep steady all the time; put up with suffering; do the work of preaching the gospel; fulfil the service asked of you. As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to depart. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his appearing.'*

In yesterday's meditation, I quoted the disastrous statements of the future Cardinal Américo Aguiar, who does not want to convert the young people who will attend World Youth Day to Christ or lead them to the Church. Unfortunately, we have reached a point where it has become necessary to warn, since such facts and statements represent a danger to the faith.

Pope John Paul II's address to World Youth Day in Rome in 2000 still had a completely different tone:

"Yours is not just any journey: if you have set out on pilgrimage it is not just for the sake of recreation or an interest in culture. Well then, let me ask again: what have you come in search of? Or rather, who have you come her to find? There can be only one answer to that: you have come in search of Jesus Christ! But Jesus Christ has first gone

in search of you. To celebrate the Jubilee can have no other meaning than that of celebrating and meeting Jesus Christ, the Word who took flesh and came to dwell among us.” ([https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20000815\\_gmg-accoglienza2.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000815_gmg-accoglienza2.html))

The passage we heard today from the Letter to Timothy allows us to understand how one can arrive at such serious deviations from doctrine, as are the aforementioned statements of Monsignor Aguiar, which, unfortunately, are not an isolated case: *"The time is sure to come when people will not accept sound teaching, but their ears will be itching for anything new and they will collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes."*

How important it is that right doctrine be passed on! That is why the Apostle Paul conjures Timothy: *"proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement - but do all with patience and with care to instruct."*

The Word of God and the right doctrine of the Church shape our thinking and enable us to walk steadily in pursuit of Christ.

The Word of the Lord helps us to acquire the gift of discernment of spirits, which is so important. When we are familiar with His Word, we will know how to distinguish His voice from other voices. Therefore, we will only listen to and follow the true Shepherd. We will identify Him through love and truth. Since we love the Lord, we long to hear His voice and to sit at His feet to listen to Him (cf. Lk 10:39). It is He who speaks and our hearts are opened.

His voice becomes so familiar to us that any other voice that is not in tune with His and that pretends to teach us something different can be strange and spiritually unpleasant. The same is true of right and sound doctrine. It penetrates so deeply into the soul that it can cause us spiritual pain when we hear statements that are not grounded in truth, especially when they come from within the Church. Sound doctrine, on the other hand, edifies, enlightens, discerns the feelings and thoughts of the heart (cf. Heb 4:12), strengthens us and gives us a clear orientation.

On the other hand, false doctrines, statements infected by error and half-truths are complicated, confusing, cloudy and leave the soul empty. A false light stands between the supernatural light-the Word of God and authentic doctrine-which is meant to enlighten our understanding and enable us to penetrate the mysteries of faith with reason. This false light leads us away from the truth.

To try to answer the question of how such deviations as those issued by the future cardinal come about (and unfortunately there are more and more cases in the present Pontificate) we must also consider that sound doctrine is not taught enough. The proclamation of the Gospel resounds less and less with authority, calling men to conversion and teaching them to keep what the Lord has commanded us. Thus, the People of God, instead of being formed and instructed by the Word of God, can be deformed by the errors of many modernist theologians, who can even become false teachers.

St. Paul knew well what he was doing when he urged the young Timothy in the Name of God and of Jesus Christ to transmit the right doctrine. Let us listen again carefully to his exhortation, "*Proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement.*"

What would St. Paul say today about so much disorientation that has permeated the Church of God? Certainly he would urgently call for conversion and the authentic proclamation of the Gospel. Urgently!