

19. July 2023

The Simple Way

Mt 11:20-24

'At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

In today's Gospel, we find two affirmations of the Lord of great importance.

Firstly, Jesus' rejoicing in the wisdom of His Father. The essential contents of life - namely the encounter with God and communion with Him - are not limited to the literate. No! God's way is accessible to all people, and it is often the simple who easily understand what faith means and the gift that God gives them in it. In this context, those other words of the Lord also come to mind: *"In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven"* (Mt 18:3).

This quotation echoes the same theme... Children, especially when they preserve their innocence, are simple people. It is not unusual for them, with their characteristic simplicity, to hit the nail on the head in matters that we adults often recognise only after a long journey.

In my personal experience, I can also say that often the simplest people quickly understand spiritual things; while they remain inaccessible to those who rely too much on their own wisdom and ambitious for the intelligence of this world.

Why is this so?

It turns out that spiritual content is not so much a matter of intellect and academic formation. Rather, it is a matter of grasping the essentials from within, which requires an open heart. The Holy Spirit touches our spirit and our heart with His light. If the mind humbly opens itself to this light, it comes to a great knowledge, which is not the

product of its own reasoning. It is a supernatural light, which reaches us and can also easily penetrate a person who is not endowed with great intellectual qualities.

When a person is very much marked by the intellect and looks primarily to it for his or her security and identity, it can even become an obstacle. Then it can happen that, because of so many complex sophisms, one fails to grasp the essentials that God offers us. It remains locked up in the limited understanding of a creature, and does not attain supernatural knowledge.

It is probably to such that the Lord refers when speaking of the *“learned and the clever”*, who are self-sufficient and admire the works of their own understanding.

The Lord's second statement makes it very clear to us that only through Him can the Father be reached and known: *“No one knows the Son except the Father, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him”*. In another part of the Gospel, the Lord says: *“No one can come to the Father except through me”* (Jn 14:6b).

Whoever follows my daily meditations will know very well that this is a point on which I insist again and again. The reason why it is necessary to emphasise it is because this statement of Jesus is often no longer passed on as He pronounced it and as it was announced by the Church down through the centuries. It is those complex sophisms that seek to shake this truth, and present ways of salvation parallel to faith in Christ.

However, simple souls must not be seduced by such errors; they must hold fast to the unequivocal Word of Christ and the authentic doctrine of the Church. They must simply follow this simple logic: If Christ is the Son of God - which every Catholic believes - then it is evident that only He can truly show us the Father. If Jesus is the Son of God and our Redeemer - which every Christian believes - then it stands to reason that no one can go to the Father except through Him. It is as simple as that!

And if this is so and the Christian internalises this truth, then one will do everything so that other people will also come to know Jesus and obtain salvation in Him. That's right!

The question of what happens to people who have not had the opportunity to meet Jesus in their lives can be left to good theologians who are faithful to the right doctrine.

In any case, simple souls are convinced that God will show love and justice to such people.