

18. September 2023

God wants all people to be saved

1 Tim 2:1-8

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling.

Intercession and thanksgiving must never disappear from our prayer life, even if we feel more called to serve the Lord in silence and contemplation. The proclamation of the faith must reach all people, to communicate to them the Good News of salvation.

With our prayers we can reach all people, without exception. This is a great opportunity that God offers us to take responsibility for others. No one should feel too small and unworthy to render this service, and God will give a place of honour to the one who has been faithful in his intercessory prayer.

St. Paul today mentions in particular prayer for all those in positions of authority. We should keep them in mind every day, not forgetting to pray for them. Certainly these people are even more tempted than others and need the "backing" of our prayer so that they are not tempted to abuse their authority. If they did, it would affect all the people entrusted to them. Certainly this is one of the reasons why St. Paul especially asks for prayer *"for all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way"*.

The Apostle to the Gentiles is full of conviction and knows that he has been sent to proclaim salvation to all men, for *"God our Savior, desires all men to be saved"*.

When we see this missionary strength in St. Paul - surely a fruit of the Holy Spirit - we can ask ourselves: Where is this apostolic zeal today? And were not all missionaries in the past driven by this same conviction that souls must be saved? And what about today? Certainly there are still Christians who allow themselves to be moved by the Spirit of God and are willing to make great sacrifices and efforts to proclaim the Gospel. But is there still enough awareness in our Catholic Church that all people must be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth through Jesus Christ?

In this context, I am reminded of the regrettable words of the auxiliary bishop in charge of the World Youth Day in Lisbon recently: "We don't want to convert the young people to Christ or to the Catholic Church or anything like that at all"

(<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/254764/future-portuguese-cardinal-on-wyd-we-don-t-want-to-convert-the-young-people-to-christ>).

So what is the point of an ecclesial event like this? Don't young people come together to celebrate and deepen their faith? Wasn't this the intention of Pope John Paul II? Surely!

Don't young people have a holy right to have the Church proclaim the Saviour to them? And doesn't the Church have a holy obligation to do so? Of course!

We need to rekindle the fire in us, that is, the Holy Spirit, which is in danger of being extinguished. The Church lives from her Lord and is guided by His Spirit. It is to Him that all must listen and obey: from the Head of the Church down to the least of the faithful.

The work of evangelisation is not yet finished. But whom can the Lord send if, instead of proclaiming the Gospel in the awareness that all men must be saved through Christ, all religions are put on the same level? Who will continue to burn for evangelisation if the goal of building a fraternal world is presented as the goal and all men are not brought to the knowledge of the truth?

This truth has a name, a concrete face, as today's reading shows us: "*there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all*".