

20. October 2023

No hypocrisy

Lk 12:1-7

At that time, so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Indeed, hypocrisy is very dangerous and can occur in various areas. That is why Jesus warns us so strongly against it. It is pretending to be something you are not, and perhaps not even trying to be. In this way you give a false image of yourself, and this creates a deep incoherence.

If, for example, one were to occupy a position of religious authority and deceive people by pretending to be something that one is not, this is particularly tragic for simple people who like to trust. Therefore, in order not to lose vigilance, it is also necessary to look at the fruits that come from a person, because "*a sound tree cannot bear evil fruit*" (Mt 7:18).

The Lord was aware of the hypocrisy in the hearts of the Pharisees, and He openly points it out, because in the religious sphere these falsehoods are even more devastating than in the secular sphere. Indeed, in the secular sphere it is easier to question those in authority, but it is more difficult to do so with religious authorities, since they are commissioned by God and therefore deserve our trust and respect. However, we must take to heart the Lord's warnings and be aware that even in the "sacred environment of the Church" we can encounter this hypocrisy and must guard against it, lest we fall into a trap.

But not only does the Lord make us aware of this problem, He also shows us the way to arrive safely at our destination: it is our relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is in Him that we must place our trust, completely and unconditionally. It is Him we must fear!

Jesus wants us to understand that the Father has everything in His hands and will never let us out of His sight or take His love away from us. No one has power over us except Him! Even if persecutions come upon us, even if hostile powers from the outside try to exercise their dominion over us, they can only kill the body, but they have no power over our soul. We have many examples in the history of the Church of countless martyrs who resisted their tormentors and did not deny their faith. Not infrequently, their persecutors made them offers, some of them hypocritical, which would have enabled them to escape the danger which threatened them. But they stood firm in the face of temptation because they trusted in God.

In a figurative sense, we can also encounter hypocrisy when we are told, for example, that sin is not so serious, that certain immoral acts are part of human nature and that it is therefore not necessary to reject such tendencies. This is hypocrisy on a spiritual level, which leads people to stop struggling against temptations because they are no longer considered temptations, but are declared permissible.

Here it is necessary to be deeply anchored in God, in His commandments and in the sound teaching of the Church. After all, behind such errors and temptations there may be spirits hostile to God who want to deceive people and lead them away from the right path. They too present themselves hypocritically, pretending to help people by relieving them of a heavy burden. In this way they may even wrap themselves in a cloak of mercy.

Therefore, let us beware of all kinds of hypocrisy.