

3. April 2024

The example of Peter

We will listen to the reading that corresponds to the traditional calendar:

Acts 3,13-15.17-19

At that time, Peter addressed the people: The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant[a] Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

With great courage, Peter speaks the truth to the people who were partly to blame for the death of our Lord. Evidently the spirit of fortitude was at work in Peter, making him capable of omitting nothing that had to be said in order that the people might realise the great injustice that had been committed and in which they themselves were involved. We see that the Apostle does not protect himself or allow himself to be carried away by human respects, leaving the events in the shadows or even relativising them. At the same time, we perceive that Peter's words have no hint of bitterness in them and that he does not take the position of an accuser, much less an avenger.

"Brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers."

In these words of Peter echoes the cry of our Lord on the Cross: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Lk 23:34).

This balance between truth and love, which, on the one hand, makes you capable of speaking the truth, but without falling into the bitterness that makes it difficult for people to admit what they have done, is the fruit of a deep spiritual formation. Peter

calls the people to conversion: *"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out"*.

Certainly they were not aware of who He was whom they had crucified, nor did they know that they had disowned their Messiah. Moreover, the people had been incited by their religious leaders, and so it could so easily happen that the shouts of rejoicing at the Lord's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday turned into the cry of "crucify Him" on Good Friday.

But Peter even attests to the ignorance of the leaders of the people. He also calls them to acknowledge their guilt, to do penance and to convert.

I believe that in this speech of St. Peter we find a model of how to deal with the serious conflicts that are taking place in the Church and in the world.

How can we deal with the errors that are being added to the current Pontificate and in which, unfortunately, many of the faithful are also involved? Even if - thank God - more voices have been raised in the Church against the latest Vatican statement "Fiducia Supplicans", refusing to follow its erroneous indications, it is already rather late for this reaction. The post-synodal exhortation "Amoris Laetitia", the Abu Dhabi declaration, the Vatican's tolerated and not atoned Pachamama cult, the Motu Proprio "Traditionis Custodes" and the totally uncritical support for government measures in the Covid crisis had already opened up abysses into which many of the faithful fell, trusting the church hierarchy.

Along with Peter we could say: they acted out of ignorance; they did not identify the deceptions. Following Peter's example, we would have to add that even the leaders acted out of ignorance. They probably even believed that they were following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and that this would renew the Church and make it more capable of surviving in the modern world. However, they are wrong.

If we look at the situation in the world, we recognise the great deception that took place in the context of the Covid crisis. Perhaps most of the leaders really acted out of ignorance, believing that the injections would avert a disaster. But this was not the case. The consequences of the injections and other misguided measures are becoming increasingly apparent.

So how can we apply the example of St. Peter to this situation?

The truth needs to be told objectively, to the extent that it is recognisable. Those responsible in the Church and in the world must be made to recognise the mistakes they have made and the consequences. However, our words must be free of bitterness, but without false concessions.

Those responsible must admit their faults and be converted. Offering them this path by telling them the truth is a duty of charity, even when there seems to be no indication that they are willing to take responsibility for what they have done.

The acknowledgement of guilt and the conversion of people are not in our hands. Nor do we know where corruption or even ill will has come into play. Only the Lord knows, and He will deal with it.

As far as the Church is concerned, it is up to us to remain faithful to authentic doctrine and to distance ourselves from all error. As far as the world is concerned, we also need a good discernment of spirits so that we do not blindly obey authorities whose instructions bring harm.

In all of this, we are called to trust in God, who will sustain and guide us in these times of confusion.