

15. July 2024

Serve your Lord in true humility

Mt 23:8-12 (Gospel according to the commemoration of St Bonaventure)

You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up.

In today's text, the Lord gives us instruction on how to escape the pernicious pride that all too easily darkens us and creates a world of illusions.

It is deep in human nature to want to achieve something great or to be great ourselves. We know that it was Lucifer's temptation to no longer accept his wisdom and beauty as an entrusted gift from God and to serve the Giver of gifts in joy. Instead, he wanted to take hold of everything himself and be considered the cause of his wisdom and beauty. He wanted to be like God but without aspiring to the goodness and love of God. We know how it turned out. The archangel Michael put him in his place on behalf of God (cf. Rev 12:7-8) and when Lucifer lost his place in heaven, he came to earth in anger (cf. Rev 12:12b) and continues his mischief here until his time is up and he is thrown into the lake of fire (cf. Rev 20:10).

Now man is also tempted in pride and can easily go astray. Jesus counteracts this by showing us the reality in today's text.

Our real Master and Rabbi is Jesus. Everything comes from Him and everything goes to Him (cf. Col 1:16). We should not see ourselves as masters, nor should we see others as masters out of themselves. When we meet someone who helps us on our path with God, it is a great gift and we can accept it gratefully. But we must never idealise him as if he had the wisdom of himself. Divine wisdom is always a gift and whoever forgets this will become blind and may also blind other people. Jesus makes this abundantly clear to us in several places, knowing very well the temptation of man. If this is not

taken into account, there is always the danger that man will take the place of God and ultimately become an idol.

In the same direction go the further statements of the Lord concerning father and teacher. If, for example, we call priests Father, then this is always a fatherhood in Christ, as is an abbot in a monastery and similar designations. This must always be clear to all, that no artificial situation is created.

Saint Augustine once said it very aptly: “For you I am a bishop and with you I am a brother”. So it is true: the rabbi, the teacher, the spiritual father is never it of himself, he is it in service to Christ and to other people. If we look at it this way, then we can also honour him in the right way, because we then honour the Lord in his office, in his charisma, in his gifts.

Finally, the Lord makes it very clear once again: *“The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up”*.

If we keep to this and try to overcome all forms of false pride and vanity in ourselves and learn to understand our whole life as a service to God and man, then we may succeed in having the evil of pride purified out of our hearts. God will certainly help us if we ask Him.

Serve your Lord in simplicity and always remember that you have received everything from Him! If you serve in this way: This is great!

It might be a help for this theme to listen to my teachings in YouTube about humility. It is in English translated into Spanish.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZpmkVXRZcQ>