

23. July 2024

The true parentage of Jesus

Mt 12:46-50

He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly his mother and his brothers were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. Someone said to him: Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to speak to you. But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'

This Gospel passage is in no way a rejection by the Lord of His mother and brothers and sisters, as might appear at first glance. Rather, the Lord broadens our gaze by directing it to the whole of humanity, which is called to constitute a single heavenly and universal family.

However, kinship with Jesus has one essential condition: the fulfilment of the Father's will. In these words of the Lord we can glimpse something like a "new creation". Whereas the original creation of man arose from the goodness of the Father who wanted to create beings in His image and make them live in Paradise in a state of innocence, the new creation has a different character.

In this new creation God comes to us as Redeemer of a humanity that is often far from Him, of a humanity that is less and less interested in fulfilling the Will of the Father, of a humanity that often lives "in darkness and in the shadow of death" (cf. Lk 1:79).

But God invites this humanity to a great intimacy with Him. This can already be seen in the fact that God Himself, in His Son Jesus, takes on our human nature. Jesus becomes like us in all things but sin (cf. Heb 4:15).

And now that God offers Himself as Father to fallen humanity and draws it to Himself, the indispensable condition remains in place for this kinship with God to be truly

fulfilled: the fulfilment of His Will. If we sincerely strive to do this, unification with God and also unity among ourselves as human beings can come about.

This is indeed the case: between people who try to live in the Will of God there arises a naturalness and a mutual understanding that goes far beyond natural kinship. And this counts for all people, regardless of race and nation, because it is a supernatural relationship, which does not come "from flesh and blood", but is born in the Spirit of God (cf. Jn 1:12-13).

This is what Jesus means when He points with His hand to His disciples, who have become for Him mothers, brothers and sisters. This supernatural relationship can even arise within the natural family, when the same condition of being united in the fulfilment of God's Will is fulfilled.

It is an immensely generous offer on God's part to call us to live in this intimate relationship with Him, and in order that we may realise it, He sends us His Spirit.

It is now urgent to bring this invitation of God to all people. This is the mission of the Church, in which the concrete sign of unity among people is already realised. This applies especially when she preserves her inner unity: unity in doctrine and in the right practice that flows from it.

This is the mission Jesus gave us: *"Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time"* (Mt 28:19-20).

All human attempts to achieve unity and brotherhood will be fruitless if they are not obtained as a gift from the Father. We can see this again and again in history. Only the Spirit of the Lord enables us to live in full communion with Jesus, fulfilling the Will of God. That is why it is so important that we Christians live with our attention fixed on God, that we listen to the voice of the Spirit and obey Him. It is He who will bring unity among men, when they recognise the Lord and turn to Him.

This does not mean that we cannot practise even before certain elements of unity among men, but these are very fragile and do not go to the utmost depth! Moreover, they are

susceptible to falling into a "pseudo-unity", such as that which comes from ideologies, which can deceive people in their longing for unity.

Humanity must recognise the love of its Heavenly Father and learn to live in the truth. This truth exists and has a concrete face! Moreover, it is a Person: "*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*" (Jn 14:6). Only in the truth can we find true communion, for God is the truth. Whoever sincerely seeks it will find it, and whoever does not close himself off will be found by it.