Balta Lelija

10 November 2026

The school of humility

Lk 17:7-10

At that time the Lord said, 'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal at once"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty".

This Gospel passage gives us as clear a lesson in humility as hardly any other. These words of the Lord place us in the reality of our existence, within the following of the Lord. Whatever the Lord has entrusted to us, even the greatest missions, it is important that we deeply assimilate this message. We only fulfill our task, and any exaltation of our own person is detrimental. We are indebted to God's love, so it is only natural that we put ourselves at His service. In eternity we will see how God, in His immense generosity, will value and reward all that we have done for Him. We can hope that our reward will consist of immense closeness to Him. But in the meantime, we simply do what has been entrusted to us, with our eyes fixed on Him.

Lest there be any misunderstanding: It is by no means a question of adopting the attitude of an oppressed slave and obeying the Lord without freedom. Rather, we can consider these words of the Lord as advice to counteract the great danger of pride. In fact, this is the real and dangerous evil that can infect us. Let us remember that it was pride that made Satan unwilling to continue serving, and this same pride also manifested itself in the original sin, because man wanted to be like God (cf. Gen 3:5).

How, then, can we overcome this pride which so easily accompanies us and nestles in our hearts? For this process, let us take as a lesson the example that the Lord gives us today.

Let us suppose that we realize that we have done something well. It is legitimate to rejoice over it! However, in order to avoid the interference of pride, which brings with it self-exaltation, we must first of all thank the Lord. The good deed was only possible thanks to His help, whether direct or indirect!

Thankfulness preserves us beforehand from focusing our gaze on ourselves and from glorifying our own person. If we are aware that we are indebted to someone - that is, to the Lord - then we will open our inner self to Him and understand the given situation adequately.

Moreover, we must "hide" behind the good deed, i.e., we must not emphasize it to others in order to arouse their admiration or other similar reactions. We have only done our duty, and whatever has been praiseworthy, we must attribute to the Lord. If other people praise us, we give these praises to God, thus giving them their rightful place.

However, even if we put all this into practice, we will inevitably be besieged by feelings of pride and vanity. But we can deny them our consent and overcome them in prayer. Here prayer is also a certain spiritual self-education, which leads us to the right attitude towards God. It will be very helpful to invoke the Holy Spirit, as well as to meditate on the biblical passages related to humility.... With the passing of time, those insistent thoughts and feelings will lose strength, because we have denied them our consent. The Lord knows our efforts and will look at our intention, and not at the feelings or thoughts that we do not really want.

By persistently distancing ourselves from all those attitudes contrary to the following of Christ within us, and by exercising ourselves, with God's help, in the right attitudes, we will also be cooperating in our interior purification. For if in concrete situations we confront our pride and the corresponding feelings and thoughts by invoking the Holy Spirit, then this pride will become weaker and weaker. Thus, we will have moved in the right direction.

How liberating it will be when this affirmation of the Lord becomes more and more true in us, for then we will do things without drawing attention to ourselves, without fixing our eyes on ourselves and without needing to exalt ourselves! This happens when we do everything to glorify the Lord. He alone deserves all the glory!