

Sunday, October 13, 2024

XXVIII Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

Wis 7:7-11; Ps 90; Heb 4:12-13; Mk 10:17-30

In this Missionary Month, Christ's call to follow him, to leave everything behind for the Gospel and eternal life, calls us. He wants people who are poor at heart, who seek only to live by the riches of his Word, who pray to receive and radiate his wisdom. Being a disciple-missionary leads us to renounce the riches of this world and to choose the only riches that can satisfy our hearts: the riches of the Lord's love, as today's Psalm asks. "Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!" (Ps 90).

Pope Francis gave the example of Madeleine Delbr el as a seeker of God who lived in agnosticism until the age of twenty. Then she set out in search of God with a deep thirst and an emptiness that cried out in her anguish. Her journey of faith led her to choose a life totally dedicated to God, at the heart of the Church and the world. "Dazzled by the encounter with the Lord, she wrote: "Once we have heard God's Word, we no longer have the right not to accept it; once we have accepted it, we no longer have the right not to let it become flesh in us; once it has become flesh in us, we no longer have the right to keep it for ourselves alone. Henceforward, we belong to all those who are waiting for the Word" (We, the Ordinary People of the Streets, trans. David Louis Schindler, Jr. and Charles F. Mann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 62)" (Catechesis 25. The passion for evangelization). Isn't that what this Sunday's letter to the Hebrews testifies to? The word of God is living and effective (Cf. Heb 4:12), and will be incarnated in us so that we can bear witness to it to others.

Another disciple-missionary who left everything to follow Christ and be a witness to his Gospel is Brother Charles de Foucault. "After living his youth being distant from God, without believing in anything other than the disordered pursuit of pleasure, he confides this to a non-believing friend, to whom, after having converted by accepting the grace of God's forgiveness in Confession, he reveals the reason of his life. He writes: "I have lost my heart to Jesus of Nazareth". Brother Charles thus reminds us that the first step in evangelizing is to have Jesus inside one's heart; it is to "fall head over heels" for him. If this does not happen, we can hardly show it with our lives. Instead, we risk talking about ourselves, the group to which we belong, a morality or, even worse, a set of rules, but not about Jesus, his love, his mercy" (Catechesis 23. The passion for evangelization).

The disciple-missionary has found the treasure of which Jesus speaks in today's Gospel. Continuing his catechesis on Charles de Foucault, the Pope speaks of this treasure: "When one of us gets to know Jesus better, the desire to make him known, to share this treasure, arises. In his commentary on the account of Our Lady's visit to Saint Elizabeth, He makes him say: I have given myself to the world... take me to the world. Yes, but how is this done? Like Mary did in the mystery of the Visitation: "in silence, by example, by life". With one's life, because "our entire existence", writes Brother Charles, "must shout the Gospel". And very often our existence shouts worldly things, it calls out many stupid things, strange things, and he says: No, "all our existence must shout the Gospel". He then decides to settle in distant regions to cry out the Gospel in silence, living in the spirit of Nazareth, in poverty and concealment. He goes to the Sahara Desert, among non-

Christians, and he goes there as a friend and a brother, bearing the meekness of Jesus the Eucharist” (Catechesis 23).

Jesus’ promise to anyone who leaves everything behind for the sake of him and the gospel is to enter eternal life, the kingdom! This is impossible for man, but possible with God! In this Missionary Month, let us celebrate God’s continuing call to all to follow him and give of themselves for the Gospel and the Kingdom. Finally, let us allow God to make possible our desire to embrace mission wholeheartedly. This call is also reflected in the theme of next Sunday, the World Mission Sunday: “Go and invite everyone to the banquet (cf. Mt 22:9).”

In “Come and follow me,” as in “Go and invite everyone,” there is a call to go. Let’s return to the testimony of Madeleine Delbrel: “To be with you on your path, we must go, even when our laziness begs us to stay. You have chosen us to stay in a strange balance, a balance that can be achieved and maintained only in movement, only in momentum. A bit like a bicycle, which does not stay upright unless its wheels turn [...]. We can stay upright only by going forward, moving, in a surge of charity”. It is what she calls the “spirituality of the bicycle” (cf. *Umorismo nell’Amore. Meditazioni e poesie*, Milan 2011, 56). Only on the move, on the go, do we live in the balance of faith, which is an imbalance, but it is like that: like the bicycle. If you stop, it does not stay upright” (Catechesis 25 The Passion for Evangelization).

The rich man in the Gospel who seeks eternal life has not found joy, but the sadness of materialism. On the contrary for those who, have found true joy in giving everything and choosing Jesus, Pope Francis reminds us that today is an opportune moment to proclaim Jesus and the joy of the Gospel: “Thus, like the two at Emmaus, one returns to daily life with the enthusiasm of one who has found a treasure: they were joyful, those two, because they had found Jesus, and he changed their life. And one discovers that humanity abounds with brothers and sisters waiting for a word of hope. The Gospel is awaited even today. People of today are like people of all times: they need it. Even the civilization of programmed unbelief and institutionalized secularity; indeed, especially the society that leaves the spaces of religious meaning deserted, needs Jesus. This is the right moment for the proclamation of Jesus. Therefore, I would like to say again to everyone: “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew” (ibid., 1)” (Catechesis 26).

Finally, let us join Pope Francis in giving thanks during this Missionary Month for all those who have responded to the call to leave everything behind for the proclamation of the Gospel:

“I take this opportunity to thank all those missionaries who, in response to Christ’s call, have left everything behind to go far from their homeland and bring the Good News to places where people have not yet received it, or received it only recently. Dear friends, your generous dedication is a tangible expression of your commitment to the mission *ad gentes* that Jesus entrusted to his disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). We continue to pray and we thank God for the new and numerous missionary vocations for the task of evangelization to the ends of the earth” (Message for World Mission [Sun]Day 2024).