Thursday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 7:36-50): A certain Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner." Jesus said to him in reply, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" Simon said in reply, "The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven." He said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The others at table said to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

"She stood behind him at his feet weeping"

Mons. José Ignacio ALEMANY Grau, Emeritus Bishop of Chachapoyas
(Chachapoyas, Peru)

Today, Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to dine with the purpose of drawing people's attention. It was an act of arrogance, but his behavior when he met Jesus, did not even correspond to the most elementary

good manners.

While dining, a public sinner does a great act of humility: “she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment" (Lk 7:38).

On the other hand, when meeting Jesus the Pharisee did not give Him the greeting kiss, or water for His feet, a towel to wipe them, nor did he anoint Him on the head with oil. Furthermore, the Pharisee said to himself: “If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.” (Lk 7:39). It was the Pharisee, in fact, who didn't know who He was!

Pope Francis has very much insisted on the importance of approaching the sick, thus "touching the flesh of Christ". Upon canonizing St. Guadalupe García, Francisco said: “by renouncing an easy life in order to follow Jesus’ call she taught people how to love poverty, how to feel greater love for the poor and for the sick… And this is called “touching the flesh of Christ”. The poor, the abandoned, the sick and the marginalized are the flesh of Christ.” Jesus touched the sick and He allowed them and the sinners to touch him.

The sinner of the Gospel touched Jesus and He was happy to see how her heart was transmuted. For this reason, He gave her the peace to reward her courageous faith. -You, my friend, do you come with love to touch the flesh of Christ in so many that go by your side and need you? If you do it, your reward will be the peace with God, with others and with yourself.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “For this woman, beholding the spots of her shame, ran to wash them at the fountain of mercy, and blushed not at seeing the guests.” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “God always waits for us, even when we have left him behind.” (Francis)

- “Contemplative prayer is the prayer of the child of God, of the forgiven sinner who agrees to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more (cf. Lk 7:36-50) (...)” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2712)

Other comments

«Your faith has saved you; go in peace»

Fr. Ferran JARABO i Carbonell

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Today, the Gospel is calling us to be attentive to the forgiveness, which our Lord offers us: «Your sins are forgiven» (Lk 7:48). There are two things we Christians have to remember: we have to forgive without judging the person and we have to love a lot, for we are forgiven by God freely. It is like a double movement: the forgiveness received and the loving forgiveness we have to grant.

«When someone insults us, do not put the blame on him, but on the devil who is forcing him to insult us, and throw upon the devil all your wrath; as for the unfortunate whom the devil forces to do what he does, feel sorry for him» (St. John Chrysostom). We are not to judge the person but to condemn the evil act. The person always is the continuous object of the Lord's love, so only our acts move us away from God. We have, therefore, to be always willing to forgive, receive and love the person, while refusing those acts opposite to God's love.

«The sinner wounds God's honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a Son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone» (Catechism of the Church, n. 1487). Through the Sacrament of Penance the person has the possibility and the opportunity to rebuild his relationship with God and with the whole Church. Our reply to the forgiveness received can only be our love. Recovering the grace and the reconciliation has to bring us to love with Christ-like love. We are called to love as God loves!

Let us especially wonder today whether we realize how great God's forgiveness is, if we are those who love the person and fight the sin and, finally, if we attend with confidence to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. With the help of God we can do anything. May our humble prayer help us too.