Tuesday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:51-56): When the days for Jesus to be taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?” Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village.

“He resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem”

Fr. Félix LÓPEZ SHM
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Today the Gospel offers us two main points for personal reflection. In the first place, it tells us that "when the days in which He was to be taken to heaven were completed, Jesus made the decision to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51). The verb that Saint Luke uses means "to complete", "to consummate"; Jesus brings to fullness the time marked by the Father to complete His salvific mission through crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Then He is going to be glorified, "taken to heaven." Faced with this perspective, Jesus Christ "made the decision to go up to Jerusalem," that is, the firm decision to love the Father by carrying out His redemptive will. Jesus dies on the cross saying: "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). The Lord has lived to fulfill the will of the Father, and He has maintained that attitude of faithfulness until death.

This is how we too must live even if we experience opposition or rejection, contempt or marginalization on the road to God because we are faithful to the Lord. Pope Francis says: "True progress in spiritual life does not consist in multiplying ecstasies, but in being able to persevere in difficult times. Walk, walk, walk on and if you are tired, stop a little and then start walking again; but with perseverance."

Secondly, in the face of the Samaritans' rejection, James and John want to call down fire from heaven (cf. Lk 9:54). The Lord rebukes them for their indiscreet zeal. We must remember God's patience with us and be patient with our brothers on their way to God, even if they do not respond immediately to His grace. God wants all men to be saved and has given His only Son on the cross for all. God exhausts every possibility of approaching every man and waits with divine patience for the moment when every heart opens itself to His Mercy.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “In our time, the Bride of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy and not take up the weapons of severity” (Saint John XXIII)

- “How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! (Francis)

- “The whole Church is apostolic... in that she is "sent out" into the whole world. All members of the Church share in this mission, though in various ways...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 863)

Other comments

“Jesus turned and rebuked them”

Fr. Jordi POU i Sabater
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Today, in the Gospel, we can see how when “James and John saw this they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?” Jesus turned and rebuked them” (Lk 9:54-55). These were Apostles’ shortcomings the Lord corrected.

There is a tale about a water carrier in India who carried two vessels, using a stick of wood he had hanging on his back: one was perfectly made but the other was half cracked in its surface and was losing most of the water. This one —quite sadly— used to glance at the other, so perfect, until one day, quite ashamed, told its owner how miserable it felt because due to its cracks it could only give him half of the water he should be selling. But the water carrier told the vessel: —When we get back home look at the flowers growing along the way. And, sure enough, the vessel did look at them: they were indeed the most beautiful flowers, but realizing its cracks were again dropping half of its water, the vessel insisted: —I am worthless, I do everything wrong. But the carrier said: —Did you notice that these flowers only grow on your side of the way? I knew you had cracks so I figured out how to take advantage of them, and I sowed the seeds of the flowers where you dropped the water and, by watering them as you did I am now able to pick these flowers for God's Mother’s altar. If you were not as you are, this beauty could not have been created.

In a way, we are all like this cracked vessel, but God knows quite well His sons and gives us the possibility to take advantage of our cracks-defects for something good. Thus, the apostle John —who today wants to destroy— with the Lord's correction, becomes, in his letters, the apostle of love. The chastening did not

discourage him, but rather he could see the positive side of his burning temperament —the passion— by placing it at the service of love. Let us hope we will also know how to take advantage of the corrections, drawbacks —sufferings, failures, limitations— to “start and restart”, as St. Josemaria defined saintliness: docile to the Holy Spirit in converting ourselves to God and becoming his instruments.