Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 17:5-10): The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

"Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

"We are unprofitable servants"

Fr. Javier BAUSILI Morenza
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we are presented with a Gospel with two seemingly unrelated parts. What does faith have to do with service? Without realizing it, we constantly reduce faith to concepts and ideas. We relegate Faith to simply believing in God. And we forget the relational dimension!

We cannot simply believe in God; it's not an idea. It's a living, personal, transformative relationship, and that changes everything. Faith is also living the Gospel. And living the Gospel, relating to the Lord, places us as servants, as servants of the Kingdom, in the words of Pope Leo XIV: "Priority must be given, then, to our relationship with the Lord and to cultivating our dialogue with him. In this way, he will make us his laborers and send us into the field of the world to bear witness to his Kingdom. "

Thus, we understand why the Lord concludes His teaching in this way. When our hearts are flooded with the Lord's Love and our faith becomes a lived reality, sharing it is the least we can do (cf. Luke 17:10). Living as He offers us is not a way of repaying what we have received, for it is priceless; living as He offers us is the natural dynamism of a heart in love. "He accompanies me with his Spirit; he enlightens me and makes me an instrument of his love for others, for society and for the world" (Pope Leo XIV).

And that is our task as Christians: to be a light in the world, to make this gift we have received shine forth. Through our works and words at all times and in all places (cf. 2 Tim 4:2). This is possible not through concrete actions, but because our entire lives become living witnesses to the Love that has

redeemed the world. “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5), and we will be your servants.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "The Lord compares the perfect faith with the mustard seed because in its appearance it is humble, but burning inside" (St. Bede the Venerable)

- "Those who are firmly founded on faith, who trust totally in God and who live in the Church are capable of conveying the devastating power of the Gospel" (Benedict XVI)

- "Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother: "We believe the Church as the mother of our new birth..." (Faustus of Riez) Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 169)

Other comments

“We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do”

Fr. Josep VALL i Mundó
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Christ's message is once more about service. The Gospel is always insisting upon the spirit of service. And it helps to see how the Word of God Incarnate —Yahweh's, Isaiah's servant— “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave” (Phil 2:7). Christ also said: “I am among you as the one who serves” (Lk 22:27), “as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). Jesus' example was clearly apparent when He washed his disciples' feet, thus accomplishing a servant's task. With that gesture He wanted to make quite evident that His followers were to serve, help and love each other, as brothers and servants to all, just as He proposes in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We have to live all our Christian life with that sense of service and without believing we are doing anything extraordinary. All our family, professional and social life —in the political, economic world, etc. — has to be imbued with this spirit. “If you want to be useful, serve”, asserted St. Josemaría Escrivá; he wanted us to understand that “to be useful” we have to live a life of generous service without seeking honors, human glory or applause.

In the old days it was usual to call the “nolentes quaerimus”—“amongst our rulers let us look for those who do not desire power; those who do not want to show off”— when it was time to nominate someone

for the Hierarchy. To this day, this must be the purpose of the good pastors, ready to serve the Church, as the Church wants to be served: to assume the condition of servants as Christ did. Let us remember the well-known words by St. Augustine stating how the ecclesial function has to be exerted: “Non tam praeesse quam prodesse”: “It is not so much to dominate as to be of use; not for one's own prestige but for the utility of others”.