

Saturday 28th in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 12,8-12): Jesus said to his disciples, «I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But the one who denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. There will be pardon for the one who criticizes the Son of Man, but there will be no pardon for the one who slanders the Holy Spirit.

»When you are brought before the synagogues, governors and rulers, don't worry about how you will defend yourself or what to say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you have to say».

«Whoever acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge»

Fr. Alexis MANIRAGABA

(Ruhengeri, Rwanda)

Today, the Lord arouses our faith and hope in Him. Jesus forestalls that we will have to appear before the Heavenly Host to be examined. And whoever has spoken out in favor of Jesus by adhering to His mission «the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God» (Lk 12:8). Such public confession is made out in words, in deeds and throughout our life.

This interpellation of the confession is even more necessary and urgent in our times, when there still are people who do not want to hear the voice of God nor follow His way. However, the confession of our faith will be strongly followed. Therefore, let us not be confessors for fear of punishment - that will be harsher for apostates--nor for the copious reward reserved to the faithful. Our testimony is necessary and urgent for life in this world, and God himself demands it from us, as St. John Chrysostom said: «God is not satisfied with our inward faith; He asks for an outward and public confession, to boost us to a greater confidence and love».

Our confession is sustained by the power and assurance of its Spirit who is active inside us and protects us. The acknowledgement of Jesus Christ before His angels is vital since this fact will allow us to see Him face to face, live with Him and be flooded by His light. At the same time, the opposite will be nothing else but suffering and losing our life, to be deprived of His light and dispossessed of all our possessions. Let us, therefore, plead for the grace of avoiding any denial be it out of fear of torture or ignorance; out of heresies, of sterile faith or of lack of responsibility; or just because we would like to avoid martyrdom. Let us be strong; the Holy Spirit is with us! And "With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present (...) and she has made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost» (Pope Francis).

«For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you have to say»

**+ Fr. Albert TAULÉ i Viñas
(Barcelona, Spain)**

Today, Jesus' words inviting us to acknowledge him before men, reverberate once more: «I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God» (Lk 12:8). We live a time when public life vindicates the lay status, forcing believers to express their faith only within the range of their private confines. When a Christian, a priest, a bishop, the Pope... have something to say publicly, even though it may be full of common sense, it is widely criticized, simply because it comes from that particular person, irrespective of the fact that we —as everybody else!— are also entitled to say what we think. But, no matter how much of an inconvenience it may be for some, we cannot help announcing the Gospel. In any case, «the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you have to say» (Lk 12:12). In this respect, St Cyril of Jerusalem emphasized it while affirming «the Holy Spirit, who dwells in those well predisposed, teaches us, as a doctor, what we have to tell».

The attacks we suffer, may have a different materiality, because it is not the same to reprove a member of the Church (at times, quite rightly because of our many shortcomings), than attacking Jesus Christ (when observed only in his human dimension), or slandering the Holy Spirit, whether by blasphemy or by disavowal of the existence and attributes of God.

With respect to forgiving the offense, even if the sin is light, it is necessary a previous inner attitude of contrition. If there is no ruefulness, there cannot be any exculpation, for the bridge is broken at one end. This is why Jesus says there are

sins that not even God will forgive, unless there exists the humble attitude on the sinner's side to admit his sin (cf. Lk 12:10).