



1) Opening prayer

Almighty God,
our creator and guide,
may we serve you with all our hearts
and know your forgiveness in our lives.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - John 19,25-27

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.

Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

3) Reflection

- Today, feast of Our Sorrowful Mother, the Gospel of the day presents the passage in which Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, meet at Calvary before the Cross. The Mother of Jesus appears two times in the Gospel of John: at the beginning at the wedding feast in Cana (Jn 2, 1-5), and at the end, at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19, 25-27). These two episodes, only present in John's Gospel, have a very profound value. The Gospel of John compared to the other three Gospels, is like an X-Ray of the other three, while the other three are only a photograph of what has taken place. The X rays of faith help to discover in the events dimensions which the human eye does not succeed to perceive. The Gospel of John, besides describing the facts, reveals the symbolical dimension which exists in them. Thus, in both cases, at Cana and at the foot of the Cross, the Mother of Jesus represents symbolically the Old Testament waiting for the New Testament to arrive, and in the two cases, she contributes to the arrival of the New Testament. Mary appears like the step between what existed before and that which will arrive afterwards. At Cana she symbolizes the Old Testament; she perceives the limits of the Old Testament and takes the initiative so that the New one arrives. She tells her Son: "They have no wine!" (Jn 2, 3). And in Calvary? Let us see:

- John 19, 25: The women and the Beloved Disciple, together at the foot of the Cross.

This is what the Gospel says: “Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala”. The “photograph” shows the mother together with the Son, standing up. A strong woman, who does not allow herself to be discouraged. “Stabat Mater Dolorosa!” Hers is a silent presence which supports the Son in his gift of self up until death, and the death on the cross (Ph 2, 8). But the “X-Ray” of faith shows how the passage from the Old Testament to the New Testament takes place. Like it happened in Cana, the Mother of Jesus represents the Old Testament, the new humanity which is formed beginning from the lived experience of the Gospel of the Kingdom. At the end of the first century, some Christians thought that the Old Testament was no longer necessary. In fact, at the beginning of the second century, Marciones rejected all the Old Testament and remained with only a part of the New Testament. This is why many wanted to know which was the will of Jesus regarding this.

- John 19, 26-28: The Testament or the Will of Jesus. The words of Jesus are significant. Seeing his Mother, and at her side the beloved Disciple, Jesus says: “Woman, this is your son”. Then he says to the disciple: “This is your mother”. The Old and the New Testament must walk together. The request of Jesus, the beloved Disciple, the son, the New Testament, receives the mother in his house. In the house of the Beloved Disciple, in the Christian community, the full sense of the Old Testament is discovered. The New Testament cannot be understood without the Old one, neither is the Old one complete without the New one. Saint Agustin said: “Novum in vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet”. (The New one is hidden in the Old one. The Old one blooms in the New one). The New one without the Old one would be a building without a foundation. And the Old one without the New one would be like a fruit tree which could not bear fruit.

- Mary in the New Testament. The New Testament speaks very little about Mary and she says even less. Mary is the Mother of silence. The Bible only keeps seven words of Mary. Each one of those is like a window which allows one to see inside Mary’s house and to discover how her relationship with God was. The key to understand all this is given by Luke: “Blessed are those who receive the word of God and put it into practice” (Lk 11, 27-28).

1st Word: “How can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?” (Lk 1, 34).

2nd Word: “You see before you the Lord’s servant; let it happen to me as you have said”. (Lk 1, 38).

3rd Word: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour (Lk 1, 46-55).

4th Word: “My child why have you done this to us? Your father and I were worried looking for you” (Lk 2, 48).

5th Word: “They have no wine!” (Jn 2, 3.)

6th Word: “Do whatever he tells you!” (Jn 2, 5).

7th Word: The silence at the foot of the Cross, more eloquent than one thousand words! (Jn 19, 25-27).

4) Personal questions

- Mary at the foot of the Cross. A strong and silent woman. How is my devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus?
- In the Pieta of Michelangelo, Mary seems to be very young, younger than the crucified Son, and she must have been about fifty years old. Asked why he had sculptured the face of Mary as a young girl, Michelangelo replied: the persons who are passionate for God never age!" Passionate for God! Is that passion for God in me?

5) Concluding Prayer

Yahweh, what quantities of good things you have in store
for those who fear you,
and bestow on those who make you their refuge,
for all humanity to see.
Safe in your presence you hide them,
far from human plotting. (Ps 31,19-20)