



Introduction.

Our God is the God of the encounter who comes to meet the fallen man, the work of his hands. And we marvel at the madness of a god who always precedes and surprises us.

The incarnation of the unique and unrepeatable Word of God the Father did not go down in Mary's womb simply to embark on a tourist voyage in the country of human beings, without getting involved and engaging with us. If only he had come down to pass through our lives like a tourist who passively contemplates and moves indifferently, then his coming would never have radically reversed the course of human history.

"And the Word became flesh and set up his tent among Us", it is the literal and faithful translation of the Greek original of St. Luke "He put up his tent", God did not come with a tourist passport, but as one of us. It does not mean one more in the context of human history, but it is about God among men, God made flesh among us. It's the Kenosis, the stripping that cost the father's favorite son.

However, we contemplate a stripping that perhaps has not yet caught our attention and it is precisely that Kenosis of daring to get down a little more and share the table with sinners. Christ adapts to all to save everyone as he will later Express St. Paul and this is the key to meditation to draw fruit from this amazing encounter of Jesus with sinners and how Jesus at the same time meets with me and every man at the table each day.

Mercy: heaven touches the mire of sin.

To share the table, to eat of the same bread goes far beyond the mere quenching of body hunger, for it implies and encourages the noblest values and virtues in the heart of man. Sharing the table is synonymous with friendship, cordiality, joy, unity and in this context of the Gospel is when Jesus, shedding off his being equal to God the Father, is mixed between sinners, prostitutes, thieves, without failing to be God. Heaven touches the mire of sin.

A few hours before Jesus came to sit at the table of the disheartened of these sinful people, his finger had pointed with love to one of his apostles, choosing him and drawing his attention and his heart from the shining brightness of the coins that overflowed from his tax table. Is Levi, now Matthew, who years later will awaken in his memory the spark of that beautiful call and will not hesitate to narrate it in his Gospel. Therefore, Jesus is having dinner at Matthew's house. And the encounter with the Lord hurts his soul like a sharp sword, a sword that helped him to become, in one word: mercy.

It may seem that today's world is not so different from the world of Matthew and perhaps still our hearts are wandering and do not grasp that Jesus is mercy that comes and sits at the table of our lives, our daily duties, our problems and above all De our discouraged. To remember that God is mercy and that we are beggars of God is to experience a gentle balm that drains from the tip of the last hair to the feet; It is to know loved by God. Because we are indeed wounded, we can constantly walk with wounds. How many wounds we carry through life! Wounds caused by our guilt, wounds caused by others, friends, relatives, very bad people... And Jesus with His mercy comes to be a balm that cures our wounds of sin and loneliness so that we can lift his head again and move forward on the long road of life.

Mercy: a logic that scandals.

An idea that always comes to my heart is that it is still difficult to accept that Christ is going to eat with the worst sinners, that he is so low. Our sin and hardened heart, between struggles come to accept that God embraces those people who, in our opinion, do not deserve so much affection and so much closeness from God. We tend to see the picture of mercy from afar, without much commitment, without risking touching the suffering flesh of Christ in the brother, and we do not approach, we prefer to see from afar and pass by indifferent. "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" It is the scandal that we encourage because the logic of God is overwhelming. In our interior shouts the powerful voice of "do ut mihi des", while the Mercy is given to those who cannot give anything back. On the façade of our hearts, we have placed a sign: "oculus pro oculo, dens pro dente", while Jesus goes out to meet those who have fallen, sharing his forgiveness, sometimes offering his cheek, because he knows that we usually forget our good promises of conversion and interior change; he knows that without his grace and his Mercy, what we swear in the light, we deny in the dark because we are sinners.

I remember an occasion when I could see that many times, we need to open ourselves to grace and the divine sense of forgiveness and mercy. I finished my second year of novitiate in Colombia. He was a newly professed temporary vow out of the spiritual cradle of the novitiate. One way to the airport I was going to visit my family in Brazil-the taxi driver started talking with me and told me that he believed firmly in God and his love, that the Lord had never forgotten him because

he felt happy and blessed with many thanks. I had a wonderful wife and two lovely children. His work was a thousand wonders and he had always striven to be a good person and a good Christian. Sim However, at a certain point in the conversation he said: "Father, I find it hard to understand and accept that there are so many bad people in this world and that, besides, things will go well! They don't deserve them. They are bad and sometimes, why does God allow them to have more success and live better than we do that we strive to live honestly, to earn our money and our bread with the sweat of our forehead, to always have a straight conscience? "

I felt that what the taxi driver said was very true. The human mind is like what happened in the parable of those who were called to work in the vineyard; At the end of the day, the Lord paid equally to everyone, both those who worked all day and those who worked only a small part of the day. This provoked the complaint and discontent of those who got up early in the vineyard of the Lord: "How is it possible that those who worked well earn little like us who have fatigued in your vineyard?". The taxi driver's complaint was similar to the one in the parable. Then I passed through my mind the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is the same rationalist complaint that comes out of the heart of the eldest son, once he arrives home, hears music, learns that there is a party because his younger brother has returned, and therefore is indignant and complains. "Father, I serve you so many years and you never gave me a kid to party with my friends. Now that son of yours returns that squandered all your inheritance with prostitutes, do you kill a primal steer and party?" It's the outrage of the cabbie! The same! "Father, why do you bless bad people?" It turns out that humanely I agree with the taxi driver.

However, the question is that the cause of our grievances and misunderstandings in the infinite mercy of God toward sinners is that we sometimes work and deliver ourselves fully into the Lord's Vineyard, but we do not work and give ourselves with love and disinterest to Lord of the Vineyard. We choose to serve faithfully in the paternal house that translates into our parish, in our community, at home, in the hospital, at work, at school, but we do not choose to serve the Father of the house, that is to say, to serve only God our Lord. We struggle and we are interested in the things of God, but not to God himself, who is mercy and that is why we do not understand with the eyes of the father the return of the fallen and the encounter of which was lost. We are concerned about the salary at the end of the day and the Lord of the Vineyard is nothing more than a patron for us. The money and the goods of the father, but not the father, are pressing. And this is the main reason why, even being in the father's house, being good Christians, followers and faithful compliers of the commandments, men and women of Church and frequent sacraments, we do not enter in harmony with the mercy of Jesus Towards the worst sinners; For if truly our only treasure were Jesus, there would never be any complaints like the Gospel of our hearts: "Why does your teacher eat with the publicans and sinners?" Complaints like the taxi driver: "Why does God bless and have compassion on those bad people?" We are talking-in short-of this constant struggle that is locked in the vast battlefield of every man's heart. Love or hate? Forgive or revenge? Help or cross your arms?

When we are tempted to think or say that the worst sinners deserve the due punishment for their crimes, let us think of those in prison, we do not fall so easily into this temptation, because sinners we are all. It was well expressed by Pope Francis in a general audience when he touched on the subject of visiting the imprisoned: "They are not worse than we are since all of us are also able to make mistakes in life" (1). The task of the Christian is to look with the eyes of mercy and the world can then recognize that Jesus Christ is the Lord and it is love, it is a balm that heals our wounds.

Mercy: A doctor Who does not surrender.

The second reflection that leaves this meeting comes precisely from the mouth of Jesus to those who criticized his attitude from afar: "Do not need a strong doctor but those who are sick. So, let me learn what mercy means, and not sacrifice. I have not come to call righteous, but sinners. " This answer of Christ is the condensation of his mission, of his Kenosis, is the program to be followed by all those who wish to follow him more closely, to learn from him that he is meek and humble of heart.

In other circumstances of his public life, Jesus showed his identity to humanity using beautiful, very human symbols and images-it is the light, the way, the Good Shepherd-here in this meeting Jesus presents himself as a doctor-"I Am the Doctor"-may be the translation of Their very words: "They are not the strong ones who need medical, but sinners." Sin is a disease that always accompanies us and that is why Jesus wanted to meet with every man, to care for him, not to succumb and, of course, to live. And the lifelong medicine that he always applies in our hearts is mercy.

Christ embraces and smears our hearts with the refreshing balm of his unconditional love. Jesus is a doctor Who heals us with a heart pierced from the gallows of the cross, saying that the Christian life is a joy only when we enter into that dynamic of mercy capable of changing the world. How well to experience that Jesus Christ is a doctor and that his only medicine is mercy! For their glorious wounds, we have been cured. He does not heal us by crossing his arms, like any doctor in this land who, after doing everything possible and even the impossible to save the sick, surrenders before his impotence and the unfathomable mystery of death. Jesus, instead, opens his arms and lets himself be nailed to the wood so that the blood falls from his wounded body and tortured by the weight of our sins, watering the infertility of our land touched by sin and evil. It heals us and purifies us.

For this reason, Christians do not venerate any cross, but we venerate the Glorious Cross of Jesus Christ. The cross that makes up our pilgrimage for this world-the pain, the suffering, the persecution, the hunger, the war, the death, the

misunderstanding, the rejection, the fatigue, our infidelities-only find sense, and fulfillment when we look and worship Jesus Christ crucified who, by his example, invites us to spread love and mercy in every corner of the earth. That's being a Christian, the rest is a nice story.

They say that popular wisdom is usually very true-and worth the redundancy-very wise. Those who have read "Lazarillo de Tormes", will know that it is a very picaresque little novel, with touches of mischief everywhere. But it carries at the same time an enormous suitcase of experiential wisdom. The Spanish work of s. XVI tells the adventures of a poor boy, rogue, and vagabond called Lazarillo, which is serving for seasons to various masters, who in turn offer protection and material sustenance. Certain seasons of his adolescence, the boy went to live with a master who was blind. And often the little blind man would take some very good jugs of wine and not even offer a drink to the poor boy. Then Lazarillo decided to make a trap. He made a hole in the bottom of the vase and with a kind of cane to sip he drank some wine. The blind man sat half squatting and the boy was silent under his vase and enjoyed the delicious wine without the blind person noticing. One day the blind man touched the bottom of the vase and caught the trap. He filled the container and began to drink. When the Lazarillo put his face under the jar, the blind man released the jar, splitting it over the boy's face, which soon bled. Then, to heal the wounds that the face caused the blind man applied to wine and addressing the rogue boy said: "the wine that broke your face, now heals you" (2). This is a great lesson! The message, in the form of an analogy concerning our redemption, is clear within the context of the mercy of the father who sends his only begotten into the world. The fruit of the tree that made us sin, now in Jesus Christ, the blessed fruit of the womb of Mary, which lies on the cross, the same tree comes salvation and cures the wounds of our "Devilry" and our sins as the same wine that left the face of the guide healed him The wounds. Our wounds heal only the sweet mercy of God.

Mercy: How to enroll in this school:

The invitation of Jesus is that we enroll in the School of Mercy, where we can modify our heart of stone. "Go, then, to learn what mercy means I won't, and not sacrifice". First of all is the verb "go", which calls us, puts us in motion, shakes us from our comforts. To be merciful, it is necessary to test our hearts, for it is a learning that is always in the way of meeting others.

In the School of Mercy, the exams are passed out of ourselves, going through the streets and the existential peripheries, of which both Pope Francis speaks, and touching the pain and tearing the tears of so many of our brothers. It is comfortable and eloquent to preach or hear "mercy I want, not sacrifice" within the parish, in the selective and closed meetings of our communities, but this is not enough. If Mercy is born from the loving bowels of God, the Christian is called to sympathize and suffer from those who suffer and weep, to forgive by contemplating the merciful bowels of Christ as an example. In the School of Mercy,

the only obligatory definition for the examination is: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us".

Mercy, not sacrifice. Jesus in this wise answer to the criticizers who only look far and judge quotes the prophet Hosea who wrote: "Because I want love, not sacrifice, knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings". The context of the prophet Hosea is the same as that of Christ between the critics and the same as our world today. God is not a collector of sacrifices and burnt offerings, God accepts and blesses the sacrifices anointed by authentic mercy, by true love. The sacrifice for sacrifice is madness; the sacrifice made with love and with entrails of mercy is that which has a salvific meaning. It is enough to contemplate the one they pierced!

The sacrifice of the Christian who does not reach the fertility and to give fruits of inner peace, of sincere joy, of theological virtues in the soul is masochism because it does not entail mercy and love. Living like this translates into hell here on earth. The thermometer to measure if I am sacrificing myself joyfully on the other is mercy, is to see if the heartbeats to the rhythm of the love that first loved us. And if not, we're living a hoax.

Conclusion

This has been the meeting of Mercy. Surely after this encounter of God with every sinful man, in that kenosis to the end of the cross that entails love and sacrifice of God for us, we only want to ask the Lord to fill us with His mercy so that we may be faithful channels of his Presence in the world and authentic witnesses of his infinite mercy.

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