



1) Opening prayer

Father,
guide us, as you guide creation
according to your law of love.
May we love one another
and come to perfection
in the eternal life prepared for us.
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 - Luke 8,16-18

Jesus said to his disciples: 'No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, it is put on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be made known and brought to light.

So take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.'

3) Reflection

- Today's Gospel presents three brief phrases pronounced by Jesus. They are phrases scattered in different places which Luke collected here after the parable of the seed (Lk 8, 4-8) and of his explanation to the disciples (Lk 8, 9-15). This literary context, in which Luke places the three phrases, helps us to understand how he wants people to understand these phrases of Jesus.
- Luke 8, 16: The lamp which gives light. "No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed; no, it is put on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. This phrase of Jesus is a brief parable. Jesus does not explain, because all know what he is speaking about. This belonged to everyday life. At that time, there was no electric light. Just imagine this! The family meets at home. The sun begins to set. A person gets up, lights the lamp, covers it with a vase or places it under the bed. What will the others say? All will scream out: "But are you crazy... place the lamp on the table!" In a Biblical meeting somebody made the following comment: The Word of God is a lamp which is necessary to light in the darkness of the night. If it remains closed up in

the Book of the Bible, it will be like the lamp under a vase. But when it is placed on the table it gives light to the whole house, when it is read in community and is connected to life.

- In the context in which Luke places this phrase, he is referring to the explanation which Jesus gave about the parable of the seeds (Lk 8, 9-15). It is as if he would say: the things which you have just heard you should not keep them only for yourselves, but you should share them with others. A Christian should not be afraid to give witness and spread the Good News. Humility is important, but the humility which hides the gifts of God given to edify the community is false (1Cor 12, 4-26; Rom 12, 3-8).
- Luke 8, 17: That which is hidden will be manifested. “There is nothing hidden which will not be manifested, nothing secret which will not be known and brought to light”. In the context in which Luke places this second phrase of Jesus, it also refers to the teachings given by Jesus particularly to the disciples (Lk 8, 9-10). The disciples cannot keep these only for themselves, but they should diffuse them, because they form part of the Good News which Jesus has brought.
- Luke 8, 18: Attention to preconceptions. “So take care how you listen, anyone who has will be given more, anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has”. At that time, there were many preconceptions on the Messiah which prevented people from understanding, in a correct way, the Good News of the Kingdom which Jesus announced. “For this reason, this warning of Jesus concerning preconceptions is quite actual. Jesus asks the disciples to be aware of the preconceptions with which they listen to the teaching that he presents. With this phrase of Jesus, Luke is saying to the communities and to all of us: “Be attentive to the ideas with which you look at Jesus!” Because if the colour of the eyes is green, everything will seem to be green. If it were blue, everything would be blue! If the idea that I have when I look at Jesus is mistaken, erroneous, everything which I receive and teach about Jesus will be threatened by error! If I think that the Messiah has to be a glorious King, I will not want to hear anything which Jesus teaches about the Cross, about suffering, persecution and about commitment, and to lose even what I thought I possessed. Joining this third phrase to the first one, I can conclude what follows: anyone who keeps for himself what he receives and does not distribute it to others, loses what he has, because it becomes corrupt.

4) Personal questions

- Have you had any experience of preconceptions which have prevented you from perceiving and appreciating in their just value, the good things that persons have?
- Have you perceived the preconceptions which are behind certain stories, accounts and parables which certain persons tell us?

5) Concluding Prayer

How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the Law of Yahweh!

Blessed are those who observe his instructions,
who seek him with all their hearts. (Ps 119,1-2)