

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
XXI Sunday of Ordinary Time-Cycle A
Is 22, 19-23; Ps 138; Rm 11, 33-36; Mt 16, 13-20
Fr Dante Gabriel Jiménez Muñoz Ledo

Let Us Build Based on God

Because Peter professes his faith in Jesus: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he is incorporated as rock in the construction of the spiritual building that is the Church; he received the power to bind and loose on earth, symbolized by “the keys of the Kingdom.”

When Jesus asked his disciples, “*Who do people say that the Son of Man is,*” it was not His intention to know the extent of His popularity, but the depth to which they were understanding Him. Because it is from the intimacy of relationship that He can be discovered as Messiah.

To grasp that Jesus is not only a prophet, but also the Messiah, the Son of God, is something that comes from the Father through revelation, such as in the Transfiguration of the Lord. From that passage, the way of following Jesus is set forth: the perfect bond, fidelity to His mission. It is understood that each person, from the beginning of the history of salvation, is bound to Christ for the building of the Church and His kingdom. For that reason, this Sunday we want to reflect on this question: How do we build based on God?

This is very important if we take into account that the people of the world build based upon man. They aren’t able to see beyond prophets...when they see them. This is a world that shakes off any burden or responsibility and that wants to understand itself without God. It is a world that has failed in all its ideologies, in all its attempts to build without God.

In the beautiful passage of the Gospel that we heard today, a distinction must be made: when Peter was designated as the foundation for the building of the Church, the best translation isn't "I say to you that you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church," but "*I say to you that you are stone and upon this rock I will build my Church.*"

Each of us, like Peter, by Baptism and a personal relationship with Jesus, is automatically "a stone" in the building of the Church. This means that we are called to bear our responsibility in the spiritual building, but it is only after Peter professes his faith that he receives the designation of "rock." The stone can be cast aside if it is not useful for construction, but the "rock" is immovable, it is the foundation that endures through the centuries.

We today feel called to build based upon God and we can ask ourselves: What have we built? What have I built based on my pride, without being bound to Jesus, and what have I built based upon God? The Spirit will let you know how to build on God, but the Word of this Sunday allows us to meditate on these three ideas:

1-Let us take charge.

Today little is constructed because many people don't want to be burdened with their responsibilities from God and others. Just as Shebna, the master of the palace in the first reading, is removed from his post and stripped of his powers, many of us today could be losing everything because of not bearing our responsibilities.

A great number of young people don't want to commit themselves to the family, to the world, or to God because there is a cost to commitment, just as with a father or a mother of a family. Working for others does not fit into our individualistic and hedonistic society; neither does the effort of building something together.

How important it is to enjoy our responsibility and to be happy bearing whatever comes into our lives, knowing that the burden can be light in Jesus! How important it is to persuade ourselves that a life without duties is a life without meaning that will collapse sooner or later!

2-Let us know about designs rather than ideologies.

For a long time, the people of the world have let ideologies guide them, excluding the entire idea of a plan of God for humanity. Through the decisions that the world has made, guided by ideologies, many have suffered. They proposed that the solution to all of the suffering of humanity was in rationalism and it failed; in a communist life, and it failed; in the liberation from all moral norms through psychology, and it failed, and so on, from ideology to ideology. Finally, economic capitalism would be the solution. And here we are, without understanding the designs of God.

When the Pope appears in any part of the world, he serves as the conscience of the world, to affirm every time that one cannot live human history with God at the margin and without the law of love. For that reason, many times there are demonstrations against the Pope because the proposal of Christ in the Gospel contradicts all ideology.

When the Pope affirms the defense of life, condemning abortion; when the Pope defends the family, rejecting marriages between homosexuals; when he condemns unjust economic systems, racism, genocide, violence, etc, he doesn't damage anyone. On the contrary, he offers them the opportunity to free themselves from all ideology and to reconsider how they want to build their life and the life of the world upon God.

When the Pope acts this way, it is not outside the limits of his role; he is only serving from his ministry, using the keys that Christ entrusted to Peter.

3-Let us profess the faith.

Like Peter, let us profess our faith in Christ, understanding that in our profession we pledge our whole life. Perhaps Peter never imagined that this profession of faith would bring him to giving up his life. We all remember the way in which Peter died: when they were crucifying him, probably nailing him to the cross, he did not feel worthy to die as his Lord did, since that way was the source of life; Peter asked that he be crucified upside down.

In this time in which new and old enemies of the Church are rising up, in which the same Church cleanses and purifies itself, and in times when the faith could seem nebulous to us, how important it is to cling to Jesus, to profess fully that He is our only savior, and to become rock.

To build based on God is our only pathway. When I have met solitary people, cut off from their nuclear families, without belonging to any other family or to some group or without even a close friend—those persons who live in abandonment—and when others like that who live at home act as if they are totally alone, I like to ask them: In all the years of your life, have you built nothing? Have you not been capable of building the minimal relationship of love that would permit you now to enjoy what you have built? And have you built nothing on God?

Let us ask ourselves today: What have we built? What have I built upon man and what upon God?