

THE LORD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD

HAPPY SUNDAY TO ALL! The Gospel of St Luke is considered the Gospel of mercy because it places special emphasis on the compassionate and merciful face of God, through the actions and words of Jesus, especially with the poor, the sick, the sinners, the repentant, and the marginalized.

St Luke not only narrates the life of Jesus, but also shows how this mercy is manifested in concrete stories, such as the parable of the prodigal son, which we have heard on previous Sundays, as well as in this parable of poor Lazarus. He makes mercy a way of life, a central and urgent message for all of us.

We are about to conclude the month of September, which, as we have already mentioned, is the month of the Bible. It is time to ask ourselves how much we have grown in this closeness to the word of God, to the message of Jesus Christ.

Today, the readings pose this question: who are those who are saved? The rich or the poor?

The first thing we must affirm is that salvation does not depend on the possessions we possess. Because if this were so, God would be unjust and materialistic, and he is quite the opposite. God is the God of giving, of full and total self-giving; He seeks our salvation, that of all, at every moment, without excluding anyone.

For his part, Jesus never praised scarcity, poverty, or misery. What Jesus wants to emphasize in this parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus is that a heart that is focused on itself hardens and becomes blind to the needs of others.

The rich man is not condemned for being rich, but for his indifference to the needs of the poor, and for his lack of empathy and compassion for the needs of Lazarus.

The rich man is not accused of stealing or harming Lazarus, but rather of his inability to do good.

There are people who believe that just by avoiding evil, they are on the right path; and they say: I don't kill, I don't steal, I don't harm anyone. But they don't do good to anyone either.

This is what we call the sins of omission: not doing the good to which we are called. Omitting the good that should be done.

Let us remember a basic teaching of the Catechism of the Church: human beings were created for the praise and glory of God; when we do good, it is a way of glorifying God through our very lives, through our gifts, which in His providence He grants us.

Jesus was a deeply passionate man, first of all for his Father, but also with the same intensity for others; including among the latter, the excluded, those in need of help, in the language of Pope Francis, the discarded.

Jesus wants to broaden our vision, to invite our hearts to grow in love for our neighbor. Because the most radical and profound journey that every human being, every son or daughter of God, must make is liberation from selfishness. To stop being the center of everything.

To expand our hearts through compassion for the needs of others is to grow; it is to discover that other people exist and that they should not be invisible to each of us.

Today's world has made us increasingly self-centered, insensitive, and apathetic toward the suffering of others.

Therefore, we must understand as neighbors all those who need our help, regardless of their race, skin color, or age.

Compassion allows us to be touched in the depths of ourselves, in the depths of our being.

But it is not enough to allow ourselves to be moved; we must reach out and touch those realities and ask ourselves, "What can I do?" A true commitment to the needs of others is necessary to remedy them.

True compassion changes our plans because it takes us out of ourselves; it transforms us into Jesus.

Are we willing to accept this challenge? Let us put aside our selfishness and our omissions?

Let us ask the Virgin Mary to be instruments of help and compassion, for in this way we will reveal the true face of God. Amen.