

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

130 May 01, 2012

The Word of God and Our Response

The great reproach from modern unbelievers is the silence of God. They raise their eyes to Heaven, but they receive no sign or response from Him. Likewise, many believers – perhaps also we – feel God is in the darkness and is silent.

If we complain about the silence of God, it is because we do not lend an ear to the Gospel. God speaks to us in the Gospel. What is strange is that many are not interested in the Word of God, in the message He gives them, his “Good News.” There is a book which many Christians do not have, and if they have it, they do not read it much: the Gospel.

The Gospel, the Word of God, is always current. It is spoken at this moment, it is repeated to us continuously. It is new each day, new for each human being. When we take communion, we do not take communion with a Christ who lived more than 2,000 years ago, but with a Christ who is alive today and who is loving us today. And it is the same with the Gospel: we do not listen to the Christ who spoke to those who lived 2,000 years ago: we hear the Christ who speaks to us today, at this moment.

The Gospel is like a mirror. What must one do with a mirror? One must see oneself in the mirror. Each one of us can see himself/herself in this mirror, ponder oneself, denounce oneself, reveal oneself. But, often, one only sees others in this mirror: we become indignant by the wickedness and blindness of others.

But the Word of God demands something from me, a response. In our human-divine relations, there cannot be a divine monolog. Dialog is imposed on us. And this dialog will be fruitful according to our human participation. If the Word of God is not fruitful, it is not the fault of the seed – not even the fault of the sower – but on the ground where it falls.

How many sermons have we not heard, how many lessons from the catechism, how many exhortations in the confessional! Never before has the Word of God been extended as it has today. Nevertheless, how is it possible that it is so barren in our souls? It all depends on the disposition with which we hear it, on the openness with which we receive it. Jesus characterizes four classes of Christians, four classes of listeners to the Divine Word:

1) The first class is like the road: **hard, impenetrable, closed by custom.** The seed falls upon them without being able to penetrate their souls. They have heard an infinity of sermons, but none of them has made them change. While the Word of God is being announced to them, they think about their usual concerns, about their favorite dreams. It would be terrible if the thoughts they have while God is speaking to them would be revealed.

2) The second class of listeners are those who are **superficial**, those souls who are sensitive and enthusiastic but lack perseverance and depth. They are easily excited and believe themselves converted by the mere fact of having felt moved. Everything they hear touches their soul, but nothing is able to change them.

3) The third class is the fertile and profound ground where the seed could germinate. They are those who have good qualities to do something for God and for his Kingdom. **But they do not have time** amidst their preoccupations and earthly concerns, and they drown the seed. They are interested in too many things to also be occupied with God. They always find some idea to discuss, some defect to lament, some excuse to not think about the Word of God.

4) Which is, then, the ground on which **the Word of God bears fruit?** It is those who receive the Word of God as a revelation, those who empty themselves, take off their masks and let themselves be transformed. They are those who recognize themselves in the mirror of the Word, telling themselves: That is I. He is speaking to me. I am the one who has to change. In them, the Word of God penetrates, matures, germinates, producing marvelous fruits. Witness to this are the Saints of all times. The exemplary form of this attitude we find as always in the Blessed Virgin Mary. She responded to her vocation from God in a significant way: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to your Word.” And in two different places, the Gospel says of her: “Mary kept all these things, meditating on them in her heart.”

Questions for reflection

1. To what class of listeners do we belong?
2. With what openness and disposition do we accept the Word of God?
3. With what flexibility and perseverance do we carry it out?

Translation: Carlos Cantú, Schoenstatt Family Federation, La Feria, Texas USA 04092012