

Reflections

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44 – October 1, 2008

The Instrument

Dependence on God. We believe that the Virgin Mary is the Victress in all battles. But, what is the price of her victories? The earliest form of the Gospel says: “You will bite her offspring’s heel” (GN 3:15). What does this mean? Father Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, interprets: “This means that we live according to the cross.” The Lord and the Virgin also lived in that way. They did not have original sin, but they assumed one of its consequences: suffering and the cross.

We live according to the cross: our heel has been wounded. We have to count on this and we have to take it seriously. Which is the heaviest cross for the man/woman who aspires for the highest? It is the weight of his/her own nature, the human frailty. When facing it, we have to do only one thing: say yes whole-heartedly to our smallness and accept our weakness with great humility. This definitely is the most essential motive in order to be capable, to be accepted as an instrument. Our weaknesses are “like a trampoline hurling us into the arms of God” assures Father Kentenich.

It is something great to be able to say that God wants to use me as an instrument in spite of my weakness. We all have so many weaknesses!..... corporal weaknesses, spiritual weaknesses, moral weaknesses..... But it is even greater to say: God loves me precisely because I am weak.

Why does God permit our weaknesses, our failures? True piety in no way consists in that we do not fall nor that we are sinless. True piety consists in dependence on God, in adhering to God. The more the noble person knows his/her own weakness, the more dependent he/she feels. Therefore, God permits weakness because He wants us to attach ourselves to Him. My weakness should be like a force which pushes me into the arms of God.

The most valuable title in order to have the right to receive the mercy of God is my personal misery. Therefore, Father Kentenich can say: “Smallness known and recognized by the man/woman, by the child, means ‘powerlessness’ of the Father and ‘omnipotence’ of the man/woman.” It is what St. Paul expresses with the words: “For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 CO 12:10).

The attitude of the instrument. The great obstacle for God’s activity in man/woman and through man/woman is and continues to be the sick self-will. The true instrument has renounced it in order to be only at the disposition of God and His work. There where God places him/her, he/she is there with his/her whole person and his/her strength and lives only for his/her task.

In this context, Father Kentenich often talked about the example of a priest from Cologne. The priest had his personal ideal painted on the rectory. The painting depicted a donkey with the Blessed Virgin and Christ sitting on top of him. What he wanted to express was: I am the donkey where Christ and the Virgin Mary can ride. Like the donkey, I should carry Christ and the Virgin throughout the world. We should cultivate the awareness in ourselves of being a donkey, of being a favorite instrument in the hands of the Virgin and in the hands of God.

By calling me to this community, to this parish, God has chosen me to be His collaborator. He has chosen me to be an instrument in the hands of Mary and to do great things through me. What is important is not my ability or my personal smallness. What is important is my awareness of being an instrument, my disposition and obedience to the wishes of the Father. If I feel I am an instrument through His actions, that gives me great security with life and its challenges and it awakens an extraordinary creative power. That has been the secret of the saints.....therefore, awareness of being an instrument or awareness of being a “donkey” of the Virgin Mary and of God for His plans.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I seek God in my apostolate?
2. Do I feel I am a donkey of the Blessed Virgin?
3. Is there a personal idea in my tasks?

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