

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

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Solidarity

We all know the Biblical phrase: “I assure you that whenever you did it for the least of my brethren, you did it for me”... When we hear it, it is as if suddenly we are banished from Heaven to earth, from spiritualism to the incarnation. The surprise is deep and general. The just as do the condemned protest: “When have we seen you...?”

Jesus warns us beforehand that we will not be judged by our religious practices: we will not be asked if we have prayed, if we have prophesied, if we have attended talks, retreats or religious gatherings. The final judgment will not be based on the quantity of our communions, Sunday Masses, or confessions. All the apparent intimacy with Jesus will not keep us from being placed at the door of the Kingdom. We will not be questioned about what we did before God, but rather what we did before others.

Here Christ identifies fully with the little ones, the poor and humble. In them, God is within our reach so we can love Him and serve Him. “When you did it for one of these of my brethren, you did it for Me.”

He is there beside us with a thousand different faces. But we.....blind, hard hearted, selfish and negligent... do not know how to see Him, and better still, we do not want to see Him. We let Him go, and perhaps even despise Him. We bring forth their justice with our injustice and lack of solidarity. “Whenever you did not do it for one of these my brethren, you did not do it for Me.”

If fraternal solidarity is the only guarantee for entering Heaven, then we have no other way than to seek the face of Christ in the faces of our brethren who suffer. And when we discover it, we have to welcome them and help them as we would do it for Jesus Himself.

Thus, no Christian can remain calm while there are children who have nothing to eat.adolescents with no possibility for an education... adults who lack employment... elderly who spend the last days of their lives in resigned desperation.

Our Lord is reflected in each one of these faces because in each one of these brethren in need, God comes to meet us.

Authentic love manifests itself and becomes a reality when it is capable of becoming solidarity because love is a force of unity... a tendency to consider another as part of my own being, like my own brother in Christ.

Therefore, love is sharing: to feel the joys as my own, the hopes, anxieties and needs of the other person, and helping him/her feel that what is mine – my heart, my time, my bread – is at their disposal. Solidarity consists in this. During this difficult time we are experiencing, it is necessary that we are in solidarity with our brethren in need. Besides, it is the only sign by which mankind can recognize us as disciples of Christ and instruments of the Divine Spirit.

The worst is certainly not the bad we do, but the good we do not do. A great number of people exist who “do not steal, kill, or harm anyone,” but still do not do good.

To retire to private life... to take refuge in the multitude... to wash one’s hands before the cries of the poor and oppressed – is to become an accomplice and to be co-responsible for the injustice. But everyone will be found out and condemned when the day for responsibilities comes. Everyone will be stripped of their peace and their bourgeois security on that terrible day because God will come like a thief who does not announce the day nor the hour of his visit.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us renew not only our love for the Lord, but also our generous service to our brethren, especially to all our poor, abandoned and marginalized brethren... then at the end of our lives, we will await the invitation from the Divine Judge: “Come, blessed of my Father; yours is the Kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world!”

Questions for reflection

1. What do I do for the poorest of the poor?
2. Is religion a refuge for me?
3. Do I think of myself as a solidary person (a sympathizer with)?

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<http://cmsms.schoenstatt.de/en/resources/periodicals/virtual-retreat.htm>