

Reflections

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The Hour of Cana and of the Cross

It is St. John who transmits the two solemn words which Jesus says to his mother, one in Cana of Galilee at the beginning of his public life. Another at the Cross, at the end of the passion. The kinship between both phrases is very evident so that we do not think that the evangelist has tried to unite them mystically. They are two words which can only be understood by reading them together.

The dialogue at Cana stuns anyone who reads it naively. Mary, with the simplicity of a woman and of a mother, tries to resolve the problem of the bride and groom and asks her Son to intervene. She is probably unaware that by asking Him, She enters into the great theological designs of her Son.

And the response of Jesus is almost violent. Afterward, the Son does what the Mother asks of Him. But not without having first marked the boundaries: "Woman, you must not tell me what to do. My time has not yet come."

The response had to rip apart, in a certain way, the maternal heart. She was then not able to understand the giddy meaning of those words He was addressing to her on Calvary. He is asking her to leave the area of earthly concerns – no matter how important and painful they may be – and enter into the plan of the things of the Father.

It is the plan in which the Son lives and in which the Mother also has a most important mission. Jesus will grant the miracle, but with it He will anticipate the hour of separation between the Mother and the Son.

His public life will begin with this miracle and it will unleash the hatred of his enemies. It will anticipate the "hour," which for Jesus is nothing more than that of his death.

The estrangement

But there is another mystery. Throughout his entire public life, Jesus had maintained his Mother at a distance from all his tasks. He had even done it in ways which sound very hard to us.

This voluntary estrangement began in the infancy itself. After having permanently united to her with the bonds of the Incarnation, He had immediately begun to "tear himself" from her in order to give himself only to his Father, even though this presupposed leaving her confused and desolate: "Why were you looking for me? – He tells her when He is lost in the temple at the age of twelve – Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" It could be said that it bothered Him being looked for by Mary and Joseph. And the response must have sounded so strange to them that the evangelist adds: "But they did not understand his answer."

Later on, one day in which Jesus was preaching to the people, someone informs Him that his Mother and his brethren are there, and the Master again has a disconcerting response: "Who are my Mother and my brothers?" And pointing to those who are listening, He adds: "These are my Mother and my brothers. All who do the Will of my Father, that is my Mother and my brother."

That to be the Mother of Jesus, one had to do the Will of God, Mary knew since the day of the Annunciation. And She had practiced it. But what She still needed to learn experimentally was that the Will of God is a Will which separates, a Will which will distance the Mother from the Son in life, the same which will, in death, tear away the Son.

Therefore, this closeness at the hour of the Cross is surprising. This Jesus who has maintained his Mother at a distance in the times of joy, why does He want Her near in the times of sorrow? Evidently this presence has some greater meaning than that of pure company. There must be some theological reason for this "calling." This giddy and unexpected manner of introducing Mary into the same heart of the drama for the redemption of the world must have some meaning.

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