

Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity

Spiritual Life Committee

Monthly Reflection, March 2020

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty”

A few days ago, I was in La Estrella, Antioquia, participating in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly. An event occurred which made me reflect. While the words of the Gospel for the sixth Sunday of the ordinary cycle (Mt. 5, 17-37) were read, “...anyone who looks lustfully at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his thoughts,” a man next to me commented: “Oh, no, not really, don’t exaggerate, Father. What an exaggeration, no?” and he turned around to see if I agreed. The same thing happened once during a homily. I thought this was funny, and I asked myself: **How seriously do people really take the Word of God?** After a while I began to wonder if I should answer the same question. Immediately the Bible quote came to mind: “we thank God constantly that in receiving his message from us you took it, not as the word of men, but as it truly is, the word of God.” (I Thes. 2, 13)

You might ask me, What does this have to do with Lent? A lot, I think. Once again, by God’s grace, we have the opportunity to live this special time of preparation for the principal event of our faith: the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus. And we are tempted to prepare beautiful sermons, invite people to live the Lenten practices, appropriately decorate churches for the occasion, without causing within us the slightest effect. Maybe we are very busy with all this (the most popular of all excuses). We might think that these practices are very good for the people but not for me (that I am already on my way, I’m a brother, a minister). It is also very possible that I might not believe in any of this and thus try to accommodate my teachings and fool the people.

Without wanting to be a fundamentalist, I believe that often we don’t take seriously the Word of God and much less Church doctrine. It appears that even popular devotions and even the liturgy itself are old fashioned. **Do we no longer believe that Sacred Scripture is the Word of God and that the Lord speaks to us through the authority of our leaders throughout history and in the Church?** Every week we make a profession of faith: I believe in God the Father Almighty ..., but, **Do we believe God?** Clearly there is a difference between **believing in God** and **believing God**.

I believe that the Word of God, Church doctrine, the liturgy, popular devotions, among other things, when they are properly interpreted and lived out, are a great treasure of our faith and thus of our integrity as baptized Christians, sons and daughters of God. As religious our commitment is greater. And it is not a question of looking for someone else to point out but rather being responsible for our own identity.

I invite you to join in praying the collect prayer for the first Sunday of Lent: “Grant us, Almighty God, that the annual practices of this Lenten celebration help us to progress in the knowledge of the mysteries of Christ and that we thus be guided to a conduct ever more worthy. By Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit and is God, forever and ever.” Amen.

Note: The highlighted phrases and questions can be of help for personal reflection.

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