



Fr. Jordan: “Honor the Holy Spirit greatly...”

Homily, 10 October 2019 – Krzysztof Gasperowicz SDS

Thursday of the Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time (I)
[Mal 3, 13-20b; Ps 1, 1-2. 3-4. 6; Lk 11, 5-13]

Reflecting on today’s readings, I felt that the most obvious message was regarding prayer. In our Gospel we are invited to be persistent in our asking. However, I believe there is a deeper point expressed in our readings. It seems that while we are in the dialogue and petitioning God, how might our thinking change? In other words, how do I move from the perspective of having to be right and instead look for what is right in my sonship?

In the first letter the prophet Malachi whose name means – the message of Yaweh, reminds to people of Israel of their covenant. When remaining in a stable and consistent relationship with God, people are to put their confidence in Him. The concern about reward is important, but in the Father and son relationship it becomes secondary. Why? Basically because such intimate relationships are based on trust.

In the Gospel according to Luke, we are touched by the persistency in asking for help. However the final phrases state: how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

M. Rupnik, who visited with us during our first session in Rome, spoke in one of his homilies about the crisis happening in our Christian life. This crisis is connected with the lack of understanding and relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son. With this lack of love we tend to live our life in dualism. We compartmentalize prayer and study, prayer and working, prayer and knowledge, spiritual exercise and apostolate, public and private life. We are less able to integrate our lives as Christians, as religious, as sons of God.

It is a very inspiring fact that in the Gospel those who chose to love, even in not so perfect ways, find themselves closer to Jesus than those who perceive themselves to be right according to the law. In the first letter of John we find the statement that those who love have the knowledge. Those who do not love, do not have the knowledge. “They are in the darkness” – St John says. The schism is based on the split between love and knowledge. When we dualize our lives, we tend to focus on ourselves. Naturally, it results in a different kind of frustration. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Thanks to the presence of the Holy Spirit, we are engaged in the relationship of the Father and the Son. We are in the process of becoming and recognizing that we are sons and daughters of God the Father ourselves. In a faith community, I am invited to collaborate and to have fullness of life with all people.

Father Francis Jordan was aware of such a mechanism, it is when he writes in his diary: “Honor the Holy Spirit greatly and promote his devotion. Each day pray “Veni Sante Spiritu”. He was aware that if we do not ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit in who we are and what we do, our relationships will be based only on condition and manipulation - since I am his friend he has to give me the bread. This will not lead to a full life but only a calculating and conditional existence. The Holy Spirit can provide for us the fullness of life, instead of a life torn, split, and compartmentalized.

How can we understand this in the perspective of our lectio divina exercise? What we experience during the spiritual exercise is the process of merging our very self towards a greater awareness of our sonship. Being a son of God is the gift we can give thanks for. Whatever this reveals to each one of us, it is for the purpose of a greater freedom and love in community with God and others. So let us ask persistently of the Father that He will send us the Holy Spirit to strengthen our relationship with Him, with others and between us here. A relationship based on trust, no matter what the response might be to our persistence in prayer.