



VATICAN - "AVE MARIA" by Mgr Luciano Alimandi - Renounce self and receive Jesus

Vatican (Agenzia Fides) - "The kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off in his joy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. 'Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it'" (Mt 13, 44-46). The parables of the treasure hidden in the field and the precious pearl, which the Lord narrates to help us understand the Kingdom of God, reveal - as the Lord's Word always does - the most profound truths, salvific truths for our life of faith.

Without this knowledge we would grope in the dark (cfr Jn 8, 12), like people who are blind and know neither from where they come nor where they are going. Jesus came into the world that we might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free (Jn 8, 32). What is the truth about the One who brings us this Kingdom? Jesus uses parables to explain the Kingdom. His teaching is for everyone and so his language is that of simple people rather than that of the learned who are a small minority of humanity.

He became poor to be with the poor, humble to be with the humble so he could reach out to all men and women. To have access to his Teaching we must walk His way (cfr Jn 14, 6), the way of humility: "No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by human standards are common and contemptible - indeed those who count for nothing - to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something so that no human being might feel boastful before God" (1Cor 1, 27-29).

Anyone who despises the simple language of Jesus is on the wrong path. Anyone who expects God to do only 'marvellous' things and 'great' things will be disappointed because God prefers the greatness that hides behind 'little' things. God loves to reveal Himself through humble things!

Jesus' parables are "simple" tales, but they reveal great truths; anyone who underestimates them, today as then, loses sight of the Kingdom of Heaven, which He brings and He gives to those who enter through the door of humility: "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do." (Mt 11, 25-26).

The parables of the treasure hidden in the field and the precious pearl tell us that the Kingdom, that is the Lord, can only be found if we seek sincerely! This is true of everything we consider serious in our life: and to which we devote the most time. This should be all the more true with regard to the Lord! How can we find Him unless we seek Him, with our whole self! Once we have found Him we can only possess Him if we renounce everything in order to be possessed by Him. In these two parables Jesus emphasises that both the man who finds a treasure in a field and the merchant who finds a precious pearl, "goes and sells everything he owns" in order to "possess" what he has found at last.

Unfortunately, the Christian who has 'found' Jesus, often faces the great temptation to want to 'possess' Him without renouncing self. However this is impossible, because to possess the Lord, that is to enter into deep communion with Him and be transformed by Him, we must put aside selfishness and become like Him: filled with God's love, in other words, saints!

"Be holy, because I am holy" (Lv 11, 45), "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5, 48)! The truth of our call to holiness revealed in the Old Testament and many times announced by Jesus in the New Testament, is of fundamental importance: anyone who wants to be a disciple of Christ must first of all renounce self, in order to take up his own cross and follow Him (cfr Mt 16, 24). The cross, that is suffering which is part of every human life, is accepted not as a blessing but as a curse unless we realise that our I must be purified and free itself, to make room for the I of Jesus. This purification happens mainly through suffering, through the trials which every Christian meets on the way to follow the Lord. "There is no love without suffering - without the suffering of

renouncing oneself, of the transformation and purification of self for true freedom. ” (Benedict XVI, homily 28 June 2008).

The process of “selling everything” to “buy the treasure” is facilitated by the cross, because at the school of sacrifice for love we are led to discover more and more the true meaning of life: to become holy. To cite the Book of Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 1, 2). Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us! (Agenzia Fides 30/7/2008)