

## 11. Adoration and mission

The mission of every life culminates in communion, but most importantly it must arise from it. One who does not find the treasure cannot share it. One who does not rejoice in the treasure cannot proclaim its value for each and all.

The point, then, is not adoring Christ, that is, staying with Him as the best part of life, or living out one's staying with Him as the best part of life, just to have the strength and enthusiasm of the mission to be accomplished. The point is to stay with Him so that the mission be accomplished as that which it must be: *transmission to all of communion with Christ*, of his friendship. Our "I with Christ" is called to expand ever more to a "we with Christ," that of the Church who is called to evangelize all humanity, called to share the treasure of life with all.

This treasure does not reduce itself to moments of recollection, of adoration, of prayer, precisely because the treasure is a relationship, a friendship, and the substance of all of life. So the moment in which I pray, I sit myself down, I stop, like Mary of Bethany, in the presence of Jesus, listening to Jesus, is not an isolated moment, from which I then exit to go tend to my own affairs, even if they were the affairs of my ministry in the Church. Staying with Jesus Christ is the heart of life, whatever I do. I calm myself to take awareness of it again, to remind myself that there is a treasure in the field, that it's there even when we cultivate salad greens or construct a building there to earn bread or for some humanitarian effort.

"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col 3:17)

As St. Peter writes in his first letter: "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." (1 Pet 3:13-15)

They who remain in the relationship of adoration of Christ carries in themselves, in the midst of everything, including the hostility that threatens or wounds their life, that "point of interior solidity" that Clemente Rebora wrote about.

It is important to notice that, in this adoration of Christ, the whole Old Testament revelation comes to converge. The whole religious experience of the patriarchs, of the prophets, the whole religious experience of the Psalms, it all finds meaning in stopping before Christ, in dwelling in Christ, as He stops and dwells in the presence of the Father, in the adoration in spirit and truth that the Father seeks in us. The culmination of religion is not a place, a particular time, but meeting with Jesus and communion with Him, in Him.

"Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is

coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am he.'" (Jn 4:21-26)

Christ who speaks to us, who looks upon us, who engages with us, so human and everyday that he is tired there and thirsty by a well, without having a bucket and rope to draw water: this is the culmination of all religious experience, and is above all what cleanses all its derivations, all fanaticisms or neglects. In communion with Jesus, one enters into true adoration of the Father, after the whole humanly complicated path of the people of Israel.

But, having reached this central point, we realize that dwelling in it, remaining truly in adoration of Christ, and in the joy that this implies, has a horizon that does not close. The center is a radiant fire that spreads, without ceasing to be fire. The water that gushes from the spring does not remain closed in the spring, because if it were so it would not longer be spring water, it would stagnate.

It is the nature of the treasure that Christ alone is that it makes of the joy of possessing it, of feeling it, of seeing it, hearing it, touching it, a joy, so to speak, that "goes forth," as Pope Francis loves to say. For the nature of the treasure is the love of Christ, is charity, that which unites the Son to the Father in the communion of the Spirit.

When I did a month of visiting experience in the monastery I then entered, at a certain point I was literally taken and swept away by chapter 15 of the Gospel of St. John, especially verses 1-17. There I found the definitive answer to the problem I was posing myself about whether my life would not have been more useful if I remained in a more apostolic vocation, toward which I had been aiming up to then. Meditating on the words, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5), I definitively understood that the problem of every vocation is not imagining where and how we will bear fruit, but discovering where and how we remain in Christ and He in us, that is, where and how we understand that Jesus grants us and asks us to be united to Him, to live friendship with Him.

For this reason, no vocation is better than another. The best vocation is always only that one in which each person is called to stay united to Jesus. For some this happens in marriage, with wife, husband, children, presence in society. For others in departing on mission in distant lands. For others in the ministerial priesthood. For others in the religious life, in which there are infinite different shades of meaning, like the monastic life.

Chapter 15 of St. John then always accompanied me, always revealing new lights to me, like other Gospel passages. Also while preparing these meditations, I was struck once again by a passage that I would like to explore more deeply with you: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (Jn 15:9-13)