



HOMILY 7/18/2024

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1. "We conceived and felt the pains of childbirth, but it was wind that we gave birth" (Is 26:18). The prophet Isaiah draws a contrast between life with God and life without him: the prophet is very much the interpreter of the desolation that often besets God's people.

Isaiah goes even further. He refers to all those situations in which, without God's intervention, everything seems to result in success and happiness: "I don't need God to be happy!", we hear so often. It's similar - Isaiah says - to a woman who has conceived and even suffered the pains of childbirth... "But it was wind that we gave birth"!

This is the drama of the contemporary world, of so many of its conquests and victories! It is the tragedy of so many Christian communities and so many Christians! Everything seems to work without God: the work of our hands, built only with our sweat, our knowledge, our will, and with what seems to be our freedom, and without God! The wonders of technology; the achievements of science - a new way of life, without the rules and dogmas of religion, they tell us. A happy family life without God. "Free at last" - they whisper to us! "But it was wind that we gave birth to"! Everything suddenly fades away. The Tower of Babel that we insisted on building crumbles like a house of cards...

2. When Jesus invites us: "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28), he is not looking for a few more members for his "association of good deeds". The question is absolutely not whether we are more or less: the question is whether or not we bear fruit. Or rather: to bear real fruit or to generate wind!

Jesus assures us of two things: a) that with him - only with him! - b) that, with him, we bear a yoke which, far from weighing us down, rests us! Because that yoke is Jesus himself. Yes: he, meek and humble of heart, always ends up bearing our pain, the weight of our sin, transforming it into life.

Let's remember Simon of Cyrene (Mk 15:21). Simon, a foreigner, was returning from a day's work and was obliged to relieve the burden that the man condemned to death could no longer bear. He did so to his displeasure. However, we know that this was the gateway to his conversion, since his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were known to the entire Christian community. After all, it was Jesus who took Simon's cross and transformed it: the weight of the Cyrenian's life (like so many others - us!) was transformed into rest, into faith, into Christian life.

3. Or let's also remember that day when Peter and John went to the Temple in Jerusalem and found a paralyzed man: "Look at us. I have neither silver nor gold, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk" (Acts 3:4-6).

They could have offered a coin: they would certainly have helped that man. And they would have given of themselves - perhaps they would have given everything they had to feed themselves that day, like the poor widow's offering (Mk 12:42). An enormous generosity. But in their poverty, Peter and John dared to go further: they dared to offer what they didn't have, but which is their most precious possession: Jesus of Nazareth. And the weight of that paralyzed man was radically transformed.

Or, as Fr. Caffarel put it: "By giving himself to Christ with this gift which I have called 'conjugal', the Christian renounces everything, renounces loving anyone for himself, but will rightly come to love all beings not for himself but for Christ who, living in him, leads him to love" (Spirituality, 176).



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Yes: Jesus makes a difference in everyone's life. Only he can really make a difference! That's why our first mission - also as Teams of Our Lady - is to offer him up: it will never be wind that we give birth to!

