

Mary forms us to live to the rhythm of this Child

Homily, 11 October 2019 – Piotr Szyszeń SDS

[translation]

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Savior (for the Salvatorians)
[Is 9, 1-3.5-6; [Sal:] 1 Sm. 2, 1-5.6-8d; Ac 1, 12-14; Jn 2, 1-11]

"The people that walked in the darkness saw an intense light, those who lived in a country of shadows were flooded with light." The prophet describes in this way the situation in the northern region, the region of Galilee, during and after the Assyrian captivity. This characteristic, as we know, St. Matthew in his Gospel applies to the people of Galilee, whom Jesus meets, whom he teaches and heals. This diagnosis, we Salvatorians, hear every year, together with the Church, firstly in the solemnity of the Nativity of the Saviour, and also today, on the feast of the Mother of the Saviour. And we also hear the promise that has been fulfilled in Jesus: "A child has been born to us, a son has been given to us." The people of ancient Galilee received the promise of a sign, which is also a sign for us: a new-born child, a son. It is very moving for me that a sign for the "dark country of death" is a child. Every child is like a light in the dark. Every child is the revelation of life. Each child reveals the heavenly Father. In fact, we hear that one of the names of the child announced by the prophet Isaiah is "Father" ("always Father"; "Eternal Father"; "Father who does not die"). Jesus of Nazareth is the revelation of the Father. "Jesus of Nazareth with his word, with his gestures and through his entire person reveals the mercy of God" (MV 1). "The whole life of Christ is the Revelation of the Father: his words and his works, his silences and his sufferings, his way of being and speaking. Jesus can say: 'Who sees me, sees the Father' (Jn 14, 9) (...)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 516).

I can say that this observation guided my meditation today at our feast of Mary, Mother of the Saviour. We have heard: "Thus, in Cana of Galilee Jesus began with his signs ...". But, let us remind ourselves that before Jesus delivers any sign, He himself is a sign. Before delivering a miraculous sign in Cana de Galilea Jesus was an "ordinary" and mysterious sign like "a child has been born to us", like "a son has been given to us". Before Jesus utters a word, He is the Word of God. And we, before receiving the signs delivered or the words spoken by Jesus, are invited to welcome Jesus himself as the Sign. Here certainly Maria, Mother of the Saviour, is our teacher. She teaches us to welcome Jesus and each person in all his mystery. Mary is teaching us to receive the Word of God that is not only a letter or a thing, even if it is the most beautiful, but a Person. Let's imagine just a little boy and having him before our eyes, we hear Mary's invitation: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2, 5).

First, Mary teaches us attention. She teaches us to listen carefully. She teaches us to listen not only with our ears, but also and especially with our eyes, with the eyes of the heart. She teaches us to listen, even if someone does not speak. She teaches us the art of contact with the Word without words. She – the Mother, the Mother of the Saviour – introduces us to the path of meditation "day and night" (Psalm 1, 3) about her Child, her Son. In her footsteps we understand the meaning not only of "stabilitas loci" (stability of the place), but above all the importance of "stabilitas in relatione" (stability in the relationship), i.e. a loyalty to the person. It reminds us of this intuition of our Mother, the Church: Without forgetting that, "in an era as rushed as ours, perseverance and patient waiting to realize the scope of formation are called for more than ever. In circumstances in which rapidity and superficiality prevail we need serenity and depth because, in reality, a person is fashioned very slowly." (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Starting afresh from Christ: a renewed commitment to Consecrated Life in the third Millennium, n.18).

Mary, as the experienced Mother in taking care for the new-born Child, forms us to live to the rhythm of this Child, forms us to "Life according the rhythm of the Word" (once this book by Amedeo Cencini FdCC moved me a lot). On the one hand there is an urgent need for stability in contact between the mother and her child, for example, a time to eat or rest. On the other hand, there is a need for the reaction beyond the time schedule, according to the extraordinary needs of the child, for example the desire to drink or the pain that announces an illness. Let's repeat it! The Mother of the Saviour introduces us to the loving contact with the Word of God, who is a Person and thus makes us more sensitive to the needs of the people around us as at Cana in Galilea. The way sensitivity to human being is growing in us, at the same time sensitivity to God will grow.

Finally, many activities of a mother are ordinary and often hidden in the eyes of the world. They are even unnoticed and unfortunately sometimes very few appreciated. The large amount of water with which "deacons" of Cana fill the stone jars remind us of the multitude of ordinary things done in the hidden that seem to have nothing to do with the wine (with happiness) that participants of the wedding want. This hard and heavy work, "at the background," of the party may remind us of the "tired and overwhelmed" fishermen who worked all night without getting the expected result. They and we need the encounter with Jesus, who enters into relationship with the workers "at the background." We need your word: "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch." (Lk 5, 5) or "Fill the jars with water. (...) Now draw some out and take it to the master" (Jn 2, 7-8). We need your presence, presence of the Word in our life, and your word that revives our ordinary activities (mutual listening, dialogue, work ...). And even if the circumstances do not change, it changes a lot or even everything. For his word, his mandate is a source not only of obligation, of duty, but above all it is a source of love, a source of grace, a source of being able to act.

Let us pray to Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, for us and for all members of the Salvatorian Family to receive the grace of attention to God and all humans, the grace to live according the rhythm of the Word in the hiddenness of everyday life.

