INDIFFERENCE AND COMPLACENCY AMONG TRADITIONALISTS

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Dear faithful, on this Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi we contemplate the face of the Saviour present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in our ears the words of Holy Scripture resound: *Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus*. Taste and see how sweet the Lord is. We realize that God's love for us human beings is so great that He decided to remain with us here on earth. Not in some inaccessible temple of marble and gold, but even in a small chapel, in which the priest offers to God the most holy sacrifice of the Holy Mass, thus making present the sacrifice of Calvary. God desires to be close to every man, rich and poor, healthy and sick, young and old, the one who rejoices and the one who is plunged in sorrow. *O res mirabilis: manducat Dominum pauper, servus et humilis*. O wondrous thing: the poor, the servant and the lowly eats the Lord.

Christ the Lord invites all of us to the wedding feast in heaven. But as we are perfectly aware, most people despise this invitation of Christ. Most people reject this invitation of Christ, and this concerns not only the faithless Jews, to whom the Lord Jesus first of all addressed the words of the parable that the holy Church reads to us today. But this rejection of God's invitation, unfortunately, concerns a whole mass of baptized people, people who were incorporated into the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, but who lost the faith, who scorned their Saviour.

And as a warning to us, the Lord Jesus in today's Gospel points to three temptations that can draw us away from the road leading to the eternal feast in heaven and drag us onto the road leading into the fire of hell.

First, attachment to temporal goods. People attached to what is worldly, to possessions, to power, to the desire to exalt themselves, answer God's invitation with contempt. "I have bought a farm and I must go and see it." And let us note that the man invited to the feast does not point out that he has to work hard to support himself and his family, but rather that he must go and see a new estate. What does that mean? That Divine Providence has taken care that all his temporal needs are met. He could easily find time for God. He could easily answer God's invitation. But his heart has come to love what is temporal so much that he prefers to satisfy his vanity rather than serve the true God.

Second, my dear brethren, sensuality. People enslaved by the senses answer God's invitation with impatience. "I have bought five pairs of oxen and I am going to try them. I pray thee, hold me excused." These five pairs of oxen, as the Fathers of the Church point out, signify nothing other than the five senses which the Creator implanted in our human nature — senses which we ought to use in order to know the truth, to discover the world around us. But so often we human beings become their slaves. Instead of directing our eyes, our hearts upward, toward heaven, so often, enslaved by sensuality, we resemble an ox that stares dully at the ground. Such a man, enslaved by sensuality, does not feed on what is beautiful, on what is true, but chases after vain earthly pleasure. In his heart there is no room for the Lord Jesus.

And finally the third great danger, the trap: indifference. Look, this third man invited does not even try to excuse himself. He does not ask the host to regard his absence as excused, as justified. He simply states: "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." And look, at first sight this is nothing bad. He has married a wife, he lives in accordance with the natural law. But what is at first sight good, what in its essence has nothing wrong in it, leads him to complete indifference to the things of God. And this is a great danger for souls who think they are pious. For souls who are able to cope with greed, with vanity, with sensuality, but who fall into the trap of indifference, who fall into the trap of complacency: souls who think that everything in their life is perfectly arranged and there is no need to change anything, no need to answer any invitation.

And there are, unfortunately, very many such souls in the circles of so-called tradition. Too many.

And look, we must recall in what circumstances the Lord Jesus tells this parable about the invited guests who despise the invitation to the feast. Namely, it happens when the Lord Jesus has been invited to a banquet by a certain Pharisee. They are sitting at table, we can imagine it. And the starting point for this parable is the words of one of the Jewish scholars who, nibbling at the exquisite dishes, declares: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He wanted to start a sort of pious small talk, a pious discussion with the Lord Jesus. He was counting on the Lord Jesus saying: indeed, blessed; he was counting on some pleasant reply. But meanwhile the Lord Jesus simply shatters this solemn, joyful atmosphere at the table, jolts out of their complacency the Jews, those who are convinced that they are walking God's way, that heaven awaits them, that in their life everything is already perfect. It is precisely to them that, at the end of the parable, He addresses words that inspire dread: "But I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my supper." This is nothing other than the announcement of their damnation, the announcement that they will not see the kingdom of God. And we can imagine the sour faces of the Jews, so pleased with themselves. They were counting on praise, they were counting on a kind word from the lips of the Lord Jesus, and instead — such a blow.

But, my beloved, let us not think that these terrifying words of warning were directed solely to the God-killers. These words of warning Christ the Lord directs also to us Catholics; He warns us not to fall into these three snares which the devil has laid for our souls. And so it is, my dear brethren, often among traditionalists, that they somehow cope with attachment to temporal goods, with sensuality, but they fall into this complacency, they fall into this conviction that everything in their life is perfect. They have their priest, their fraternity, their institute, which replaces the Catholic Church for them. They have Mass every Sunday at the same hour, they go to their little church, they fold their little hands, but is their life really a life of God? Is it not so that a whole mass of Catholics does not differ much from the Jewish Pharisees? A great danger: this complacency, this delight in one's own life, indifference to God, to His call to conversion, to His invitation to the kingdom of heaven.

Dear faithful, in this Octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, abolished in 1955 — but we do keep the missal of Saint Pius X and we will not diminish this veneration of the Lord Jesus — we wish to remind ourselves how short the time given to us here on earth is. Even if you lived a hundred years, I assure you that in the hundredth year of your life you will find that life has passed in the blink of an eye. And this time given to us by God we must use as well as we can. Let us therefore not reject the invitation of Christ to the eternal feast in heaven, of which Holy Communion is the foretaste. Let us no longer be ungrateful men who treat with contempt the Heart of Jesus, the blazing furnace of love. Let us no longer be fools who do not care about their own salvation. But let us fall on our knees today, and when in a few moments we behold the Saviour hidden in the white Host, let us turn our eyes, our hearts to Him and repeat with faith the words of Saint Thomas Aquinas: "Beneath this veil, Jesus, I see You now. May the longing of my heart one day be fulfilled, that I might behold Your face there, where God has prepared a place for the chosen."

Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Praised be Jesus Christ.