STRIPPING OFF THE OLD MAN

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Beloved in Christ the Lord, because we keep the missal of Saint Pius X, we do not follow the changes introduced by Pius XII and John XXIII. So today, on this Sunday, we first of all honour Saint Bartholomew the Apostle. We also commemorate the 11th Sunday after Pentecost. There are two prayers in the Holy Mass. And so, in accordance with the missal of Saint Pius X, in accordance with the tradition of the Church, apostolic feasts take precedence over the Sunday. So that we may have an occasion to reflect on those who became the first missionaries, on those who became the foundation on which God built the Catholic Church.

And today we gaze upon the example of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle, who suffered an exceedingly terrible martyrdom, for he was flayed alive. My dear friends, his martyrdom reminds us all that each of us is called to strip off the old man and to be born anew, to rise again in Christ. This is the task of our Catholic life: that we be transformed, that we rid ourselves of what is corrupt, what is evil, what is sinful, what is defective, that we be reborn ceaselessly and be conformed to the Lord Jesus. And this tearing off, this flaying of the old man inevitably involves effort, it inevitably involves a certain discomfort.

The Catholic religion is not a religion meant to provide us with self-satisfaction, as I repeat to you time and again. The Catholic religion brings pangs of conscience into our life. The Catholic religion reminds us every day how weak we are, how defective we are, and how much still needs to be changed in our life. Such is the purpose of professing the Catholic religion. Not standing still, not looking in the mirror and admiring oneself, but constantly searching and asking what else I ought to change in myself, where there is still room for work, where my weaknesses are, where my defects are. The Catholic religion, my dear friends, brings into life this kind of unease, this critical thought: what is still wrong with me?

DAILY EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

That is why we are called to make an examination of conscience as often as possible, even daily. At the end of the day, to reflect, to look back on the day that has passed, to ask what went wrong, what I did badly, where my sins were, but also where my omissions were, what I could have done better. Today's feast, my dear friends, reminds us of the necessity of making a daily examination of conscience, of looking closely at where there is still something in me to be torn off, where I can still be stripped of what is evil, what is slipshod, what is shoddy.

Let us ask for this today, my dear friends, through the intercession of Saint Bartholomew: that we never yield, never give in to self-satisfaction, that we never become Catholic aesthetes gazing into the mirror and admiring what good people we are. For until the end of our life each of us, my dear friends, will have a heap of work to do, will have something to work on, will have somewhere to improve. And the Catholic religion, the true Catholic religion, brings us this pang of conscience, leads us to reflection: what else ought I to change? And the man who makes an examination of conscience every day, who at the end of the day asks himself what he did badly and what he did well today, is aware that this work on our weaknesses, this fight against sins, is a task for our whole life. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," writes Saint Paul the Apostle. Let us always keep this before our eyes and ask that Saint Bartholomew the Apostle be for us a model of stripping off the skin of the old man and putting on the new man according to the will of God, according to the Heart of Jesus.

THE SICK MEMBERS

And a second matter that is worth mentioning today. As I mentioned, the apostles, who went into the whole world preaching the Gospel, who shed their blood for the name of Jesus, with the exception of Saint John the Apostle, are the foundation of the Church. Upon them, upon their faith, upon their mis-

sion the Church arose. They handed on the apostolic office through episcopal consecration, and so for 2000 years the Catholic Church has endured, built upon the apostolic foundation.

And in today's lesson, taken from the Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle, we hear a very important sentence, one we very often forget, about the right Catholic ecclesiology. So what is the Church? *Corpus Christi et membra de membro*. You are the body of Christ. Not a material, not a physical body, but the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. The mystical body of Jesus Christ. This is how the Fathers of the Church always described the Catholic Church: and members of member. In other words, in the Catholic Church we are all one great spiritual family. We are connected with one another. Just as in the material body, so by analogy we must understand how the Church functions.

And this means, my dear friends, that it is entirely mistaken, false, heretical, the conviction by which a whole mass of Polish Catholics live: well, over there in Germany they are up to some strange things, in Rome some strange things are going on, but here in Poland everything is in order. In my parish things are fine, right? There is nothing to rebel against, to resist. It is not bad, my dear friends. We are members of member. In other words, the Catholic Church constitutes a unity. And when one part of your body is sick, it affects the whole organism. If your leg hurts, if your hand hurts, the whole organism malfunctions. And it is analogous with the Church. If there are sick members in it, then that sickness affects the others as well. That sickness is not a matter of indifference.

That is why the conviction is entirely mistaken, false, heretical: "I am not interested in what is happening in Germany. I am not interested in what is happening with Cardinal Ryś, because that is far away. I am not interested in what is happening in Rome. What matters is that my parish priest is all right." Well no, my dear friends, because that parish priest too is an element of the system, of the anti-Catholic system, of the criminal system. Even if he is smiling, even if he seems pious, courteous, seems to be a believer, he does not have the Catholic faith. Because he follows those who are sick. And so he himself is afflicted by the sickness. The fact that he does not organise ecumenical meetings in your parish does not at all mean that he is not afflicted by the ecumenical sickness, because he keeps silent, does not protest, when the Lord Jesus is dethroned, when worship is given to false idols. The sickness of this or that member of the Church has a negative effect on its other members. And either that sickness must be cured, such a delinquent converted so that he renounces his errors and heresies, or that diseased tissue must be cut off, got rid of, so that it does not pose a danger to the other members of the Church. These are the two possible solutions. In other words, either they will convert, or one must cut oneself off from them, sever all ties, so that they do not pose a danger to your soul.

GIVING OUR OWN SKIN

This is what we forget, my dear friends, today, in the times of the smiling Leo XIV. Beneath this smile lurks, and I repeat this time and again, a great danger. It seems to us that if things are well with us, that is enough, and we need not concern ourselves with what is happening in Rome, in Germany, in France, in the United States or wherever. Well no, my dear friends. What is sick must be either healed or cut off. There is no other choice.

Dear faithful, let us therefore ask today, through the intercession of Saint Bartholomew, for the rescue of lost Catholics. So many lost, deceived, who have followed false shepherds, that they too may have their eyes opened, that they too may cut themselves off from this great spiritual danger. For he who does not give worship to Jesus Christ, directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, worships the devil. Such is our reality. *Tertium non datur*, there is no third possibility. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth," says Christ the Lord. And no powder of pseudo-piety, of pseudo-religiosity will change that or hide it.

The martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew, so cruel. Imagine: you cut yourself, how it hurts. You blow on it, you puff on it, you look for a plaster straight away, to cover it up, so as not to see blood by any chance. They flayed him alive only because, solely and exclusively because, he remained faithful to the Lord Jesus. The question for each of us: would I be ready to give up my skin for the Lord Jesus? Or do I perhaps value more this bodily shell that sooner or later will fall apart, rot? It will simply rot like a piece of spoiled

meat. Do I value this bodily shell more, or eternal life? Am I ready to have myself flayed for the Lord Jesus? Or would I rather live in such a way that it does not hurt? So that I do not have to sweat, to toil, so that things would be good for me, so that I would be comfortable in my own little world, in my soap bubble that I have created for myself, in which nobody and nothing interests me.

Let us beware, my dear friends, of such a dangerous spirit, of such a dangerous way of thinking, of such indifference, of becoming indifferent to what happens in my life, indifferent to what happens in the world, what happens in the Church, indifferent to the fate of my soul and indifferent to the fate of other souls. Let us be ready to give our own skin, our own life, to Christ.

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