SIMPLICITY OF HEART AGAINST DUPLICITY

Bp. Michał Stobnicki

Beloved in Christ the Lord! When we hear the words of today's Gospel, we probably understand very little of it all. And yet this Gospel could be called a warning that the Lord Jesus addresses to us, a very important warning: a warning against duplicity, which leads to unbelief.

For look, a doctor of the Law comes to the Lord Jesus, a Pharisee, and as we read in the Gospel, he tempts the Lord Jesus. Saint John Chrysostom explains that he comes in order to lay a trap for the Lord Jesus. He draws near to the One who is the truth, he draws near to God Himself, and wishes to catch Him out on some little word. He wishes to hear from the lips of the Lord Jesus some new commandment that would replace the most important commandment, the first commandment, the love of the Lord God.

What a loathsome Pharisaic, Jewish perversity! A perversity that makes the Pharisees plot conspiracies against the Lord Jesus again and again. They try to catch Him in a trap, they try to seize upon some word, they try to find an argument with which to attack the Lord Jesus, to accuse Him, to accuse Him falsely. And for the three years of Christ's public ministry the Pharisees follow Him step by step, listening to His teaching. But these, my dear brethren, are duplicitous men. In Holy Scripture we read: *Os bilingue detestor*. "I hate double-tongued mouths." And such are precisely the Pharisaic mouths. A tongue that is able to kill. A tongue that will not hesitate to commit the greatest villainy, the greatest baseness. A tongue that wishes to accuse God Himself. Loathsome duplicity.

UNBELIEF AND PERVERSITY

To what does this human perversity lead? To what does human duplicity lead? Christ the Lord shows us, when He turns to the scribes with the question: "What think you of Christ? Whose son is He?" And they give an answer that exposes their unbelief. An unbelief that is the consequence of their perversity, of

My dear ones, it is appalling that this Jewish, Pharisaic mentality has today permeated the whole world. Today, my dear brethren, Christ the Lord, our Saviour, is so greatly despised, and despised not only by those who are His open, avowed enemies, but the Lord Jesus also has a whole mass of hidden enemies: those who style themselves Catholics, those who have the name of the Lord Jesus on their lips, but whose hearts are filled with hatred. Filled with hatred of God and of man.

It is precisely these people, who hate God, who hate humanity, who reject and replace with a new order, with a new pseudo-Decalogue, the commandments that Christ the Lord repeats today and recalls to us: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." O, appalling human perversity! O, appalling perversity of those who today style themselves Catholics, both laity and clergy! Loathsome duplicity, loathsome duplicity of the post-conciliar church, which styles itself the Catholic Church, yet in reality already serves the devil; which has trampled on God's order, trampled on Christ's Cross, spat in the face of the Saviour, and persuades us that we no longer need a Saviour, that there is no longer any sin, no longer any need to do penance, no punishment for sin. Hell does not exist, and even if it does exist, it is empty.

Dear faithful, in this Gospel too the Lord Jesus warns us against this perversity. He warns us lest we Catholics become new Jewish Pharisees, lest we become perverse men, duplicitous men, who will smile at the Lord God while plotting how to plunge a knife into His heart.

the fact that they do not care at all about coming to know the truth. They would most gladly bury the truth deep in the earth. They no longer serve God. They come to the synagogue, but the Sabbath is their feast. The feast of their vanity, the feast of their pride, the feast of their self-love.

Christ the Lord exposes this Pharisaic unbelief today. Whose son is the Messiah, the Saviour, Christ? David's. They supposedly know Scripture so well, and yet they do not realise that the Messiah is God Himself, that it was necessary for God Himself to take on human nature, to become man and to offer Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Good Friday on the mount of Calvary, on the altar of the Cross.

The Pharisees, who style themselves lovers of the truth, despise that truth, and therefore they do not discover it. He who despises the truth will not come to know it. Only he who loves the truth will be led by the Lord God to discover it. That is why Pharisaic eyes remain blind. They converse with the Saviour. They have the Messiah within arm's reach, but they do not recognise Him. This is the fruit of perversity. This is the fruit of duplicity: the failure to recognise the truth.

And this, my dear brethren, is a warning for all of us, Catholics living in the twenty-first century. He who does not love the truth, he who does not love the true God, will lose the grace of faith. And we see, my dear brethren, to what this duplicity, this human perversity, has already led in the last several decades. A whole mass of people without faith, a whole mass of people who consider themselves learned, educated, like the Pharisees of old, who are mere fools, fools with diplomas and titles.

Dear faithful, this Gospel today should be for each of us a warning, a challenge never to become duplicitous men, perverse men, because this will lead us to unbelief, and unbelief will lead to hell.

EMPEROR HERACLIUS

What, then, ought we to do? How can we save ourselves from this perversity, from this Pharisaic, Jewish mentality, from unbelief? There is, my dear brethren, one way: simplicity of heart. We are to be simple people. Let us not confuse simplicity with Bergoglian crudeness. Just as let us not confuse poverty with Bergoglian shabbiness. A simple man, my dear brethren, is a man who lives in accordance with what he believes. A simple man is a man who does not scheme, who does not conspire. A man of simple heart is a man who loves, and therefore desires for the other what is best. And the highest good is, after all, the Lord God Himself. A simple man is a humble man. A simple man is a man ready for renunciation, for sacrifice, for helping.

Dear faithful, at the beginning of the seventh century the Holy Land was invaded by pagan Persian armies. Jerusalem was plundered. The Persians also stole the relics of the Holy Cross from the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. After a few years the Byzantine emperor Heraclius recovered the relics of the Holy Cross. Relics that are more precious than all the gold of the world, because this is the wood into which the blood of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, soaked. The recovery of this treasure brought great joy, euphoria among Christians.

And on the 14th of September in the year of Our Lord 629, Emperor Heraclius decided to carry the relic of the Cross to Golgotha in a solemn procession. To the place where the Cross of the Lord Jesus was planted, where the Lord Jesus died and shed His blood for us and for our salvation. Thousands of people, hundreds of bishops and priests, the emperor clothed in robes interwoven with gold, pearls, precious stones. Great joy, a solemn procession. When it was already drawing near its goal, when the emperor was already in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and only the last stretch remained, the steps by which he was to ascend the hill of Calvary and there lay down the reliquary with the wood of the Cross, he suddenly could not take a step forward. He stood as if paralysed. Jerusalem fell silent, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Zacharias, read this sign, which came from heaven itself, and commanded the emperor to take off his imperial robes, to take the shoes from his feet and to remain clothed only in a linen tunic. And then, my dear brethren, the procession could move on, and it reached Calvary. The emperor, carrying the relic of the Cross, just like the Lord Jesus, in a humble tunic, barefoot.

WHAT BINDS US

This story is, my dear brethren, a reminder to us, a lesson in what simplicity means. We must, my dear brethren, ceaselessly, every day, cast off from ourselves everything that constrains us, that binds us too

much to temporal matters, to what lasts only for a time, and which so often turns our attention away from eternal things. We must, my dear brethren, rid ourselves of excessive attachment both to wealth and to other people. Sometimes, my dear brethren, a person becomes our idol. It may even be some priest, some fraternity, which we begin to love, to adore more than the Triune God. Today it may be your telephone, your computer, the internet, by which you are shackled, which makes a slave of you. It may be the desire to arouse admiration in other people by your appearance, by your successes in sport or in scholarship. We must ceaselessly divest ourselves of all this, not become too attached to it. And we must, my dear brethren, ceaselessly take the shoes off our heart, rid ourselves of the shoes of pride, of self-love.

If we do not do this, if we are not simple men, of simple heart, if we do not imitate the Saviour, then, my dear brethren, sooner or later we shall become dead souls. Sooner or later we shall fall into the claws of the devil, who will entangle us more and more in what is sinful, in what is temporal, in what is earthly. Pride will grow in us, even if, my dear brethren, we do not realise it. Even if, like the Pharisees, we are convinced that we are good people, good Catholics. What matters is not how we seem to ourselves. What matters is what we are in reality, what we are in the eyes of God. You can deceive yourself, you can deceive others too, but God you will not deceive.

My dear ones, let us make the resolution today that we shall form in ourselves a simple heart, a heart meek and humble after the model of the Heart of Jesus. This is the only weapon that can protect us from this demonic duplicity, this perversity that leads to unbelief. Today's Gospel is addressed in the first place to the faithless Jews, but it is addressed also to us Catholics, because the devil tempts and deceives us too, my dear brethren, and he has already led more than one Catholic into unbelief and into hell.

My dear brethren, a humble man, a man of simple heart, when he discovers the truth, loves it and esteems it above everything, even above his own life. A humble man will have no difficulty in recognising the Saviour in Christ, and every day of his life he will desire to know Him better, to love Him more ardently and to serve Him more faithfully.

Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Praised be Jesus Christ.