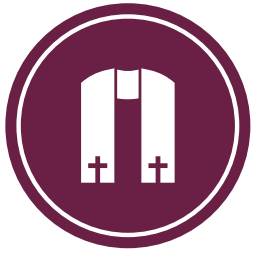


Day 18

PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

HOLY ORDERS



St. Paul prays with the Presbyters

Acts of the Apostles 20: 16-17, 28, 32, 36

Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus... From Miletus he had the presbyters of the church at Ephesus summoned...

Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the church of God that he acquired with his own blood...

And now I commend you to God and to that gracious word of his that can build you up and give you the inheritance among all who are consecrated...

When he had finished speaking, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

St. Ignatius of Antioch and longing for union with Christ, the communion of believers among themselves and with their pastors (CNS)

From the year 70 to 107 St. Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, "the city in which the disciples first received the name of Christians," said Pope Benedict XVI.

Condemned to be thrown to wild beasts, he was taken to Rome for the sentence to be carried out and took advantage of his journey through the various cities of the empire to confirm the Christians living there in their faith.

"No Father of the Church expressed with the same intensity as Ignatius the longing for union with Christ and for life in Him," said the Pope, explaining that "two spiritual currents come together in St. Ignatius: that of Paul, which tends towards union with Christ, and that of John, which focuses on life in Him. In their turn, these two currents lead to the imitation of Christ."

"Ignatius' irresistible attraction towards union with Christ is the foundation for a true mysticism of unity," Benedict XVI went on. And he recalled how in the seven letters the bishop of Antioch wrote during his journey to Rome "he frequently repeats that God, existing in three persons, is One in absolute unity, ... and that the unity Christians must create in this world is no more than an imitation, as near as possible to the divine archetype."

In St. Ignatius' letters we find "a constant and fruitful dialectic between two characteristic aspects of Christian life: on the one hand, the hierarchical structure of the ecclesial community and, on the other, the fundamental unity that binds the faithful to one another in Christ. Consequently, the [various different] roles cannot conflict. On the contrary, the insistence on the communion of believers among themselves and with their pastors is continually reformulated" using musical images such as "the lyre, chords ... symphonies."

Benedict XVI highlighted the "special responsibility of bishops, priests and deacons in the edification of the community," which must translate, above all, into "a proposal of love and unity."

"It is clear, then, that St. Ignatius was the 'doctor of unity,'" said the Pope. "The 'realism' of Ignatius invites us all to undertake a progressive synthesis between configuration to Christ (union with Him, life in Him) and commitment to His Church (unity with the bishop, generous service to the community and the world), ... between interior communion of the Church and mission, which is the proclamation of the Gospel for others."

Washing of the Feet – Basis for Holy Orders (from Dr. Leroy Huizenga)

...The footwashing scene in the Gospel of John is not only meant to be an example of humble service, but primarily a record of the institution of the Christian priesthood and thus the Scriptural root of the sacrament of holy orders...

...What is often overlooked is that the apostles are a special class unto themselves. They are not just disciples like all Christians are disciples; they are unique. Jesus chooses twelve of them for a reason, to suggest that the Church they will lead will continue the redemptive work of Israel's twelve tribes in the world. In Catholic (and Orthodox) understanding, the disciples are the first priests and bishops, and thus what Jesus says to them and does with them may not be of direct exemplary relevance for all Christians. For instance, when Jesus gives Peter alone the keys to the kingdom in Matthew 16, it does not mean that every Christian has the keys to the kingdom and the power to bind and loose.

Something more than mere exemplarism is going on in John 13. Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet has sacerdotal significance; Jesus institutes the priesthood. In John 13:3-8 we read:

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless (ean mē) I do not wash you, you have no part in me."

... "At first the disciples did not understand these things; but when Jesus had been glorified, then they recalled that it was precisely these things that had been written about him and these things they had done to him."

Fr. Jerome Neyrey, SJ, longtime professor of New Testament at Notre Dame, demonstrated that the foot-washing scene in John 13 is a "status transformation ritual" in which the disciples are made priests of the new covenant. Peter at first refuses to let Jesus wash his feet, but Jesus' response that Peter can have no "part" in Jesus (Jn. 13:8b) unless Peter submits to the ritual reveals its gravity and indicates that sacerdotal sharing in Christ is involved. Important is the observation that the phrase ean mē ("unless") indicates real transformation elsewhere in the Gospel of John:

Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (3:3)

Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (3:5)

Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (6:53)

Unless you believe that 'I AM,' you will die in your sins. (8:24)

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. (12:24)

Unless I wash you, you have no part in me. (13:8)

As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (15:4)

In John 13 we find evidence that real ontological transformation is in view. But transformation into what? Into priests, as in John 13 we also find parallels to Leviticus 16, which concerns the priestly Day of Atonement ritual:

Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting, and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there; and he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. (Lev. 16:23-24)

Observe the pattern: The high priest undresses, bathes, dresses, and offers sacrifice. It's the same pattern found in John 13: Jesus undresses (v. 4), washes the disciples' feet (v. 5-11), dresses (v. 12), and will soon offer himself in sacrifice. Whereas in Leviticus the high priest washes all of himself, in John, Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. Jesus is sharing his high priesthood with the disciples; he must wash them—that is, ordain them as priests—lest they have "no part" in his own priesthood.

Indeed, washing is part of priestly ordination elsewhere in the Old Testament. In the midst of the “consecration” of Aaron and his sons, Moses “washed them with water” (Lev. 8:6-10). We also see Aaron and his sons being washed in Exodus 40:

Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and shall wash them with water. (v. 12) [...] And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet; when they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Ex. 40:30-32)

Furthermore, the mention of having a “part” (meros) in John 13:8 recalls the priestly Levites having their portion (meris) in the LORD (Num. 18:20 and Deut. 10:9, LXX).

In short, in John 13 we have the disciples receiving a new status, the status of priests, as made clear by the substantial parallels to passages about priesthood in the Old Testament. If modern men and women wonder why Catholics have an all-male priesthood that wears vestments and offers the sacrifice of the Eucharist in churches that resemble temples, it’s because the Old Testament had an all-male priesthood that wears vestments and offers sacrifices in the tabernacle and temples.

From Vespers, Saturday March 19th, 2022 (for Adoration - 2nd Antiphon and Reading)

Ant. 2 I will offer a sacrifice of praise and call upon the name of the Lord.

Psalm 116:10-19

Thanksgiving in the Temple

Through Christ let us offer God a continual sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15).

I trusted, even when I said: *

“I am sorely afflicted,”

and when I said in my alarm: *

“No man can be trusted.”

How can I repay the Lord *

for his goodness to me?

The cup of salvation I will raise; *

I will call on the Lord’s name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfill *

before all his people.

O precious in the eyes of the Lord *

is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; *
you have loosened my bonds.
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make: *
I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfill *
before all his people,
in the courts of the house of the Lord, *
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm Prayer

Father, precious in your sight is the death of the saints, but precious above all is the love with which Christ suffered to redeem us. In this life we fill up in our own flesh what it is still lacking in the sufferings of Christ; accept this as our sacrifice of praise, and we shall even now taste the joy of the new Jerusalem.

Ant. I will offer a sacrifice of praise and call upon the name of the Lord.

READING

2 Corinthians 6:1-4a

We beg you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In an acceptable time I have heard you; on a day of salvation I have helped you." Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation! We avoid giving anyone offense, so that our ministry may not be blamed. On the contrary, in all that we do we strive to present ourselves as ministers of God.

HOMILY OF H.. ARCHBISHOP ADOLFO TITO C. YLLANA APOSTOLIC DELEGATE IN JERUSALEM ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH THE 9TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PONTIFICATE OF POPE FRANCIS AND HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION TO THE SACRED PRIESTHOOD

Dear Brother priests, Sisters, Brothers and Consecrated:

This very day the 19th of March, as we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church, we also mark the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the Petrine ministry of Pope Francis as well as the 50th anniversary of my priestly ordination.

I believe it is a great privilege for me to be able to celebrate my anniversary of priestly ordination here in Jerusalem, in the places sanctified by the priestly offering of Jesus. Providence also wanted my priesthood to be forever linked to the figure of Saint Joseph. He was an extraordinary father: if Jesus taught us to pray by saying "Abbà-Father", we owe it to a large extent to his personal experience as "son of Joseph" (Lk 4,22; Jn 1,47). The readings that have just been proclaimed highlight the importance of this fatherhood for the history of salvation: in the Gospel Joseph is called "Son of David" (Mt 1,20), that is, belonging to the messianic tribe of Judah, and for this reason his son Jesus fulfills the promises made "to Abraham and his descendants" (Rom 4: 11 reading). Joseph also, according to the prophecy of the first reading, built a house - the house of Nazareth! - for Jesus, he who is "the Name of God" (cf. 2Sam 7:12). And in the house of Nazareth, Joseph's spousal and paternal love was, for Mary and for their Son, the sign of God's free and faithful love.

Many excellent virtues, which Pope Francis invited us to meditate two years ago with his Pastoral Letter "Patris corde", are justly attributed to St. Joseph: a good and faithful servant, open in faith to accept God's plan, silent and humble ... Faced with the mysterious divine plan, he is understandably bewildered and frightened. Therefore God himself, through the angel, encourages him: "Joseph, Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary ..". This invitation - fear not! Do not be afraid! - almost always accompanies the divine vocation, with respect to whose needs we all feel inadequate. This reminds me of another passage from the Gospel, which from the first day of the priestly ministry has represented an essential point of reference for me. It is the page in which the apostle Peter walks on the waters of the lake of Tiberias, but then, overcome by fear, he begins to sink, until Jesus takes him by the hand and lifts him to safety (Mt 14: 24-33). The day after my priestly ordination, before celebrating my first mass, I was asked which Gospel reading I wanted to choose. I remember very well that, without hesitation, I chose this episode, in which I saw my entire future as a priest reflected. Let us briefly go through this episode.

The Evangelist Matthew narrates that Jesus, after multiplying the loaves, leaves his disciples in the boat, perhaps to allow them to fish during the night, and goes to pray alone on the heights surrounding the lake of Galilee. During the night, however, the sea is agitated and Jesus, seeing the disciples in difficulty, approaches the boats walking on the water. The disciples are dismayed in front of this miracle, and they are afraid that they are seeing a ghost; but Jesus in person encourages them: «**Courage, it's me, don't be afraid!**». Peter, in one of his usual passionate outbursts, asks for confirmation: "**Lord, if it is you, command me to walk on the water**". And right here begins the scene that is so close to my heart.

Jesus accepts Peter's request without batting an eye and calls him to himself: "Come!". Peter readily obeys that invitation, and he too begins to walk on the troubled waters. But then, he commits an imprudence, indeed a serious mistake: he turns his gaze away from Jesus and - so to speak - "loses contact" with him. Instead of fixing his gaze steadily on the One who calls him, he begins to "see the strong wind". Yes, the evangelist surprisingly says exactly this: Peter begins to "see the wind", that is, he no

longer fixes his gaze on the face of the Lord and begins to look elsewhere. The result is tragic and immediate: Peter is overcome by fear and begins to sink in the rough sea, risking being drowned. Seeing himself lost, Peter loses control and cries out in terror: "Lord, save me!" That is, he tries to cling to his only anchor of salvation: Jesus. In doing so, however, he returns to fix his gaze on Jesus, and the tragedy that now seemed inevitable, is averted. As soon as he hears Peter cry out to him, Jesus immediately approaches him, stretches out his hand, grabs him energetically and puts him to safety. And only after having picked him up and taken to safety does he address a moving word of reproach: "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?". Yes, Jesus first takes Peter back with him, looks at him and envelops him with his merciful love, and only afterwards does he admonish him, so that he no longer has a lack of faith.

That memorable night will have remained indelibly engraved in Peter's heart. Yet even that lesson was not enough for him: in fact we all remember how he, on the night when Jesus was betrayed, denied him three times. And also in that circumstance it was the penetrating and merciful gaze of Jesus, together with the crowing of the cock, that pushed Peter to repent to tears, as the Evangelist Luke tells us (cf. Lk 22: 61-62). We can still imagine something similar after the resurrection, when Jesus asked Peter three times: «Do you love me...? Feed my lambs ...» (cf. Jn 21). I think that it was Jesus' gaze, even more than words that reached Peter's heart and confirmed him in following him, to the point of one day making him to give his life for his Lord.

Here, dear brothers and sisters, after 50 years, I can tell you that the essence of the priestly life for me is summed up in this: to fix our gaze on Jesus and never take our gaze away from Him. To fill my heart with consolation, contemplating his gaze, full of love for me: that gaze which has conquered me, and by which I want to be conquered more each day (cf. Phil 3:12). Yes, because I too, like Peter, have learned that looking away from the Lord makes me sink into the stormy waters of this world as I exercise my ministry and live my priesthood. Allowing myself to be enlightened daily by Him, on the other hand, allows me to walk in safety, supported by His constant and unfailing grace.

My brother priests: the priesthood is truly a gift of grace. As Saint Paul, the other great apostle and missionary of the faith, says, "by the grace of God I am what I am and the grace he gave me has not been in fruitless" (1 Cor 15:10). The priestly ministry is an undeserved gift, for which I will never cease thanking the Good Lord. We, priests, are entrusted with an extraordinary, sublime and supernatural ministry: proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the divine mysteries, administering the Sacraments, giving to divine grace faithful ... As the Pope said at the conclusion of the Year of Priests in 2010, "the priesthood is not simply an "office", but a "sacrament": God makes use of us, poor creatures, to make himself present through us to all men and women, and to act in their favor. This audacity of God, who entrusts himself to human beings; who, although he knows our weakness, nevertheless considers men capable of acting in his name, this audacity of God is the true greatness hidden in the word "priesthood" ».

How to thank the Lord for such a great gift? The only thing I can do is strive to respond daily with my fidelity to the grace received. This is why I feel called to constantly fix my gaze on Jesus, our only Lord, the Good Shepherd, the Supreme High Priest, and to draw strength and peace from Him.

Therefore, together with you I thank the Heavenly Father for having called me to this sublime ministry, and I entrust my priesthood to Saint Joseph. -- Who knows how many times he, as a good and affectionate father, will have turned his gaze full of love on Jesus: first contemplating him, as soon as he was born, in the arms of the Holy Virgin; then seeing him take his first steps and respond with a smile to the blessing paternal gaze; then grow up and get lost in the Temple, "among the things of his Father"?... And I imagine with how much love Jesus returned St. Joseph's gaze, before seeing him close his eyes for the last time.

To him, to Saint Joseph, the just and faithful servant of God, Mary's husband, and Blessed Mother I ask for the grace to fix my gaze on the Divine Lord Jesus, so that the merciful gaze of the Son of God may animate and sustain my priestly life every day.

With the psalmist I raise my voice in prayer to the Lord:

Dominus adiutor meus et protector meus.
in ipso speravit cor meus, et adiutus sum,
et exsultavit cor meum,
et in cantico meo confitebor ei (Ps. 28,7)

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song I will praise him' (Ps. 28:7).



 Experience Magdala  Magdala  experiencemagdala

