

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

DELICACY OF HEART AS CHRIST'S DISCIPLES



Beloved brothers and sisters,

We find ourselves in the tenth chapter of Saint Matthew often called the "mission chapter" because it begins with Christ sending his disciples out on their mission. As we well know, even when Christ was present on earth, encountering Him meant encountering His disciples. **You may recall the passage where Jesus says: "Do not be afraid to proclaim the Lord!"** Deep down, there is a certain fear of proclaiming the Lord. But where does it come from? Is it the fear of being judged? Among practicing Catholics such as yourselves there is a certain form of self-inhibition. We hesitate to speak up, whereas in other religions, people openly display

their faith in the public sphere. Yet we, as Christians, hesitate to speak. **There is a certain reticence, a kind of timidity that John Paul II called the "silent apostasy."** Those who bear the light hesitate to speak of it. And yet, as Jesus says, **"What has been entrusted to you in the darkness will be proclaimed in broad daylight."** **Why do we hesitate to speak of our faith?**

There are several reasons. There is certainly the concept of secularism, which relegates faith to the strictly private sphere; consequently, we do not dare to speak. There is another factor, too, that makes us hesitate to express our faith: a lack of formation. We do not know how to put our own faith into words. Why do we believe in the Eucharist? Why do we believe in the Trinity? Why do we pray to the Virgin Mary? Why do we believe in all these profound mysteries? It is not so simple. It requires effort; it certainly requires formation. Regarding the transmission of the faith, one senses a sort of glitch with previous generations precisely because of that difficulty in expressing it. **Yet the Lord asks us not to lose heart. All of you here present, be absolutely convinced of the power of the Christ in us.** But take heed: by constantly trying not to disturb or impose, we risk leaving others without hope, without light. That is a form of selfishness. Jesus says "Rather, fear the One who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna."

The fact remains that the Lord tells us not to fear being witnesses, while simultaneously urging us to maintain an attitude of reverence for God's majesty. We must therefore hold fast to both: acknowledging Him before others as Jesus says, "And I will acknowledge him before My Father" while remembering that "whoever disowns Me before others, I will disown before My Father in heaven." Whoever disowns Me, who lacks that delicacy of heart, or even goes so far as to be ashamed of their own faith I will not acknowledge; I, too, will disown them before My Father in heaven.

Let us ask, then, brothers and sisters, to remain attentive: let us not be ashamed of our faith, nor let ourselves be inhibited by a surrounding environment that is hostile to its expression. **Let us be aware that the Lord Himself awaits us to be His witnesses through the qualities of our hearts without offending Him, and by caring for our neighbor through the strength of our testimony.**

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