



“... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

The last judgement will come with an element of surprise, which is hidden today in the proximity of our life. It is personal to us and very close. It comes out of a relationship that is in the making, that is not yet consumed, a relationship that we have with those who are longing for our presence. Roma said that the image of the last judgement is very scary. “Imagine how you are going to be separated. For me that is frightening.”

It is scary, more precisely the separation is like death for a community. When the soul is separated from the body it does violence to the being. The same will happen if the body of Christ is broken and not fulfilled. We feel this pain today when we come close, personally and directly, to those who are marginalized, who are set aside; when we cannot embrace and we are not able to welcome them. When we do not partake together of communion. When, at times, we experienced ourselves what is like not being able to receive an embrace because of wounds, sins or indifference. We feel and experience today this separation within the body of Christ. But we live and pray with the hope that it is not eternal. The gospel today tells us that we did not love enough, we did not care enough, we fail too much in order for the brokenness within the communal body to be healed. That’s why today we remember how ignorant we have been in our own life, lacking attention and care for the one that is hungry and naked, thirsty and alone within the community, and how this neglect leads to segregation. How many times we’ve been avoiding talking to the one that was angry, to the one that asked too many questions. How we postponed smiling today when breaking bread because our heart was heavy with disbelief. We remember people who left and others who died of overdose, or of all other kinds of modern illnesses that bring more segregation among us. How we did not know how to quench the thirst for affection of the prodigal son that was looking around him without finding the home to return to.

We see this separation in our own life at times. We hear of this separation in the gospel: we hear it in today's gospel of the last judgement, as well as in the one for the previous Sunday (between the older son and the Father), and in the gospel of the Pharisee and tax collector. And so on.

There is violence and anger when we fail to respond to the one that is reaching out for communion. When we fail being present in the life of the one who opens, in vulnerability, to the presence of the other, in order for God to manifest Himself in our midst. *"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."* (Mt 18:20).

If there is separation within the body, we sense the violence that comes with that. If there is a goat, then that must be myself, the self that was invited to communion by the vulnerability of my brother, and I left in abandonment. If it is a goat, then it must be the one that had the grace that moved the feet towards encounter. The one who had the food and the water and the clothes to share. It had the time to visit. It knew what it meant to be loved. And yet, that love did not bear good fruits within the heart.

But as there is failing there is also fulfilment. Real communion and real kindness. Genuine care for every weary soul. We are ourselves a witness to that: when we were hungry and thirsty, naked and alone we were welcomed and lived the presence of Christ within the community, as a surprise, as a healing encounter. The presence of our brother saw within our brokenness the icon of Christ. And that created within us a foundation for eternal communion. A word of hope engraved in us for a perfect time. Maybe the hand that fed us was poor and the water was offered in a chipped cup, maybe the clothes lacked in size and quality but yet, our heart was touched with eternal healing. Our witness becomes the prayer of community who is longing with hope for communion, to become the gift for the sake of unity, for quenching the violence and healing divisions in the communal body of Christ, within humanity itself.

As there is division at the last judgement, there is also communion that was built around the acts of mercy. The gospel reveals to us the truth that what stands up to violence and war, what stands up against the reign of the self, the kingdom of "I", the narcissistic movement that makes no place for the other one, to the point of wanting him perished and forgotten, is the mercy of God that works through our weakness. In order not to leave the one who begs for mercy unsatisfied. The church receives this grace in order to heal today the division of the last judgement. Any act of kindness, small or great, offered within the community, bridges the division brought at the last judgement that frightens

us terribly. Any visitation, any welcoming and presence that learns to nurture a listening heart, food and clothing and a cup of coffee at the beginning and end of the day, quenches up wars and silences with peace the violence in us. Because it brings Christ in our midst and that takes away any form of division.

“ But if at the center of the Church’s life there is this self-giving Eucharistic love, then where are the Church’s boundaries, where is the periphery of this center? Here it is possible to speak of the whole of Christianity as an eternal offering of a Divine Liturgy beyond church walls ... It means that we must offer the bloodless sacrifice, the sacrifice of self-surrendering love not only in a specific place, upon the altar of a particular temple; the whole world becomes the single altar of a single temple, and for this universal liturgy we must offer our hearts, like bread and wine, in order that they may be transformed into Christ’s love, that he may be born in them, that they may become “God-manly” hearts, and that He may give these hearts of ours as food for the world...”



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