



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE ROMAN PARISH
"SANTA MARIA MADRE DEL REDENTORE A TOR BELLA MONACA"

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Third Sunday of Lent, 8 March 2015

[Multimedia]

In the Gospel passage that we heard, there are two things that strike me: an image and a word. The image is that of Jesus, with whip in hand, driving out all those who took advantage of the Temple to do business. These profiteers who sold animals for sacrifices, changed coins.... There was the sacred — the Temple, sacred — and this filth, outside. This is the image. And Jesus takes the whip and goes forth, to somewhat cleanse the Temple.

And the phrase, the word, is there where it says that so many people believe in Him, a horrible phrase: “but Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man” (Jn 2:24-25).

We cannot deceive Jesus. He knows us from within. He did not trust them. He, Jesus did not trust them. And this can be a fine mid-Lenten question: Can Jesus trust Himself to me? Can Jesus trust me, or am I two-faced? Do I play the Catholic, one close to the Church, and then live as a pagan? “But Jesus doesn’t know, no one goes and tells Him about it”. He knows. “He needed no one to bear witness; indeed, He knew what was in man”. Jesus knows all that there is in our heart. We cannot deceive Jesus. In front of Him, we cannot pretend to be saints, and close our eyes, act like this, and then live a life that is not what He wants. And He knows. And we all know the name He gave to those who had two faces: hypocrites.

It will do us good today, to enter our hearts and look at Jesus. To say to Him: “Lord, look, there are good things, but there are also things that aren’t good. Jesus, do You trust me? I am a sinner...”. This doesn’t scare Jesus. If you tell Him: “I’m a sinner”, it doesn’t scare Him. What distances Him

is one who is two-faced: showing him/herself as just in order to cover up hidden sin. “But I go to Church, every Sunday, and I...”. Yes, we can say all of this. But if your heart isn’t just, if you don’t do justice, if you don’t love those who need love, if you do not live according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, you are not Catholic. You are a hypocrite. First: can Jesus trust Himself to me? In prayer, let us ask Him: Lord, do You trust me?

Second, the gesture. When we enter our hearts, we find things that aren’t okay, things that aren’t good, as Jesus found that filth of profiteering, of the profiteers, in the Temple. Inside of us too, there are unclean things, there are sins of selfishness, of arrogance, pride, greed, envy, jealousy... so many sins! We can even continue the dialogue with Jesus: “Jesus, do You trust me? I want You to trust me. Thus I open the door to You, and You cleanse my soul”. Ask the Lord that, as He went to cleanse the Temple, He may come to cleanse your soul. We imagine that He comes with a whip of cords.... No, He doesn’t cleanse the soul with that! Do you know what kind of whip Jesus uses to cleanse our soul? Mercy. Open your heart to Jesus’ mercy! Say: “Jesus, look how much filth! Come, cleanse. Cleanse with Your mercy, with Your tender words, cleanse with Your caresses”. If we open our heart to Jesus’ mercy, in order to cleanse our heart, our soul, Jesus will trust Himself to us.