

3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

And what should we do?

“And what should we do?” is the question asked of John the Baptist in today’s Gospel and which resonates throughout the Christian world, but with much greater intensity on the former island of Hispaniola. After five hundred and eleven years, it is necessary to put our finger on the line again and realize the lethargic sleep into which our Christian brothers have fallen again, refusing to face the question of dignity, life and faith of those who, five hundred years later, suffer slavery, deportation and inhuman work days. Now it is our Haitian brothers. Can one be a Christian and approach an altar to give thanks to a god who does not move the conscience? Is the peace that comes from ignoring what is right true?

The answers of John the Baptist are not the same for all who question him. For it is naive to ask the evangelical demand at the same level to everyone. He who can give his tunic, let him give his tunic! He who can give food should do so. Each of John’s answers is tailored to the different groups of people who question him, depending on their level of influence. It is striking that he does not ask those who hold some kind of authority, those who have the freedom or slavery of others in their hands, to have the generosity of those who do not have that influence. He is more precise with them: Do not extort! Do not make false accusations! This happens because these are precisely the ones who have to defend the weak, who have to clarify misunderstandings, who have to make the path easy and fair for others. They are the ones who have to guarantee freedom and peace!

Let us not deceive ourselves, not everyone has the same capacity to influence and therefore the impact of good or sinful actions is different for everyone. How powerful is the word of those who hold power! And therefore, how dangerous can the word be of those who hold power! Is this not an interpellation about how the word and power are used in favor of those who have to live one misfortune after another? How do we use the word to protect those who need to be embraced because they are fleeing from a painful and unwanted context? The word is so important that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. It is so important that lying is a sin.

The word well spoken, as John does, knows how to adapt to those who need to hear it and will not leave them without asking for something. The word well heard knows that it entails a commitment. The Word that comes from the mouth of God cannot remain inert, because it would not be from God. The Word of God will always be the principle of life. The Word made flesh, which is our salvation and our joy, has camped among us, among all, without distinction. Or is it that only a select group is called to rejoice? Or is it that happiness and joy are delimited by a border? Does a border make people who live in a physical area have less or more dignity than those who cross it? At this point in time, is skin color still an irrational excuse to think that human lives can be appropriated as if they were real estate? Is it the tone of voice that dictates the way in which others should be treated? Are we not all creatures of God,

born from his hands and thought in his mind to be loved equally? Is not the Plan of Redemption for all of us that we are loved by God? This then makes us repeat the same questions that our brother Montesinos asked to awaken the core of God that we all have and call conscience. Don't you understand this? Don't you feel this? How can you be so deeply asleep? What would be the response of John the Baptist if we were the ones asking, "and what should we do?" What would he answer to the authorities responsible for ensuring the rights of those who are enslaved, deported, and mistreated, who in addition to being authorities call themselves Christians? Once again, after more than five hundred years, the voice of the one crying in the desert reaches us to challenge us as it did with our brothers in Hispaniola. May God guide our response!

Prayer

God of the Word. We beg in the desert of injustice for the prophetic Word. Inspire us as you did with our brothers in Hispaniola to preach the joy of your arrival with actions of justice in favor of the weakest. We ask you this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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