

## DOING THE GOOD WELL

### LECTIO

*(what does the Word in itself say)*

*Mark 3:13-19*

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus went up into the hill country and called those he wanted and they came to him. <sup>14</sup>So he appointed twelve to be with him; he also wanted to send them out to preach. <sup>15</sup>And he gave them authority to drive out demons. <sup>16</sup>These are the Twelve: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter; <sup>17</sup>James, son of Zebedee, and John his brother, to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means “men of thunder”; <sup>18</sup>Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean <sup>19</sup>and Judas Iscariot, the man who betrayed him.

### ALLAMANO’S CHARISM IS CENTERED IN HOLINESS

\* “Your holiness: here’s my main thought, my constant worry. Do all of these youth who have come to the Institute have real and good will to make themselves holy? I feel the responsibility as being too much with regards to you! Here therefore is your duty: to make yourselves saints, big saints, soon saints” (VS 109).

\* Holiness is the Institute’s primary aim (cf. VS 111): “First our sanctification, then the conversion of the infidels; first us and then the others. Missionaries yes, but saints”.

\* Holiness is God’s will for all men: “If such then is God’s will with regards to simple Christians, what should be said of us who have received the most holy of vocations from God? Of us who have to be sanctifiers of souls?” (VS 110).

\* “As Missionaries then, you not only have to be saints, but saints in a superlative way. All of the other gifts aren’t enough in order to make a Missionary! Holiness, great holiness is needed. Miracles are obtained not so much with Science, but rather with holiness” (VS 111).

### “BE HOLY BECAUSE I’M HOLY”

\* At the heart of Scripture is God’s invitation to humanity: “Be holy because I’m holy” (1 Peter 1:16; cf. Leviticus 11:44).

\* God is “holy”, “The holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 5:19). Such holiness mustn’t be seen as one of God’s qualities amongst the others, but as that which characterizes God as God, his divinity, his qualitative difference from the creature (cf. Isaiah 6:3; Exodus 15:11), in front of which man feels like “dust and ash” (Genesis 18:27) and is taken by fear (cf. Exodus 33:20).

When Isaiah hears the proclamation of God’s holiness, he becomes aware of being a sinner (cf. Isaiah 6:4). Holiness therefore places an infinite distance and an abyss between God and man.

\* The holy God is yes a “hidden, mysterious God” (cf. Isaiah 45:15), but just, protector of the poor (cf. Isaiah 1:23; 4:14-15; 5:8.20; Jeremiah 5:26-29; 7:3), a saviour: “I will not give vent to my anger because I’m God and not a man. I’m the Holy One in your midst and I don’t want to come to you in anger” (Hosea 11:9; cf. Isaiah 49:14-15). Holiness means goodness and truth.

\* This God is a living, free, deeply other, different from man God: “I’m God, not a man, I’m the Holy One in your midst” (Hosea 5:19).

\* The God which Scripture reveals isn’t a “static” God, but manifests himself as relation, makes himself dose, capable of loving attention. John defines Him as love.

Love explains the mystery of God in itself. “The law of love is not being so that the other can be; but while I’m not so that the other can be, then I’m love, because it’s this not being which makes me be” (G. Zanghi): when God enters into relation with humanity, in fact, he does it by giving himself exactly because He’s love; he can’t do it if not by giving himself totally, “not being” in order to make the other equal to Him... and therefore God doesn’t “impose” himself upon us.

## **THE HOLY GOD IS EMMANUEL**

\* The mystery of God is a project of communication. We know Him because Jesus the Word made flesh has revealed Him: God, the Living One, the Merciful One, the Holy One, the Father, is the Emmanuel, the God with us.

Love hasn’t allowed God to remain alone: either love finds equals or makes equals. God is God-love, therefore, “not closing himself in his transcendency but transgressing the transcendency as man conceives it” (M. Durwell).

In Christ, God manifests himself as holy and “totally other”: “The Word became flesh and has pitched its tent amongst us” (John 1:14).

In Jesus, God is the friend of man, of sinners, of whoever is suffering. He shows himself as love by placing himself in the last place!

The way to be the saint of God is the exit towards the sinful world... not isolation. The peculiarity of God’s holiness is mission, the love which makes itself dose, “everything for everybody”, one with man in his sin.

Holiness is mission and mission is holiness!

“God made himself man so that man could become god” (Saint Augustine); “To those who have welcomed Him he has given the power to become children of God” (John 1:12).

## **A MISSIONARY IS THE SAINT (Cf. RM 90)**

...*Redemptoris missio*, talking about the missionary vocation, highlights the call to holiness, just like even the Father Founder would insist with his missionaries by saying: “First saints and then missionaries”.

It’s exactly in the lack of holiness that *Redemptoris missio* (cf. 2) detects the “fatigue” of mission. Even the X General Chapter of the Consolata Missionaries (cf. 32) highlights: “The shortage of a vigorous spiritual dimension [“Saints in a superlative way” (Joseph Allamano)] makes our service to mission less credible”.

\* “Therefore the renewed thrust towards *ad gentes* mission requires missionary saints. It isn’t even enough to renew the pastoral methods [...]. The future of mission depends to a larger extent upon contemplation. If the missionary isn’t contemplative he can’t proclaim Christ in a credible way” (RM 90).

Blessed Joseph Allamano would repeat that “one cannot be an authentic missionary without the tension towards holiness. Mission is born and is carried out in holiness: the missionary vocation belongs to those who love the Lord a lot. Therefore I want you to be saints and as missionaries saints in a special way. Holiness and quality for mission. Leftovers aren’t sent to the missions, but rather the best”. Joseph Allamano wants holy missionaries and extraordinary saints, qualified in “doing the good well”.

## **FIRST SAINTS AND THEN MISSIONARIES**

\* Mark describes the calling of the disciples against the background of “a great crowd” (cf. Mark 3:7-8), a multitude of sick people and possessed, people in need having come from all of the surrounding regions in order to meet Jesus.

And Jesus “climbs up to the mount” (v. 13): “Like Moses driven by the immense need of the people, climbs up to the mountain in order to listen to the Word of God, so Jesus in this frame of extreme human need, withdraws himself for the moment and goes towards the mountain of prayer” (Card. Martini).

“He calls to himself those whom he wanted” (v. 13): those whom he had at heart. The origin of his election is his gratuitous love. “And they went to him” (v. 13): they head towards a place, but towards a person.

\* The call of the disciple to stay with Jesus precedes every missionary departure: “In order to be with him” (v. 14). The Twelve are first of all called in order to “stay with him, to be with him”, to fall in love with Jesus.

“The Apostles have to see what Jesus does, to live with him, in order to then take him to reproduce his presence. Their lives have to be a continuous talking about him: a sign of his presence” (Card. Martini).

And so it was for Allamano: “The apostolic work requires great holiness: a half holiness isn’t enough. We’re God’s helpers [...]. Our holiness has to correspond to this excellence; and if we can tolerate the fact that others aren’t perfect, it’s not so for missionaries».

## **FROM HOLINESS TO MISSION**

\* “In order to send them to preach” (v. 14): mission is the ministry of the Word and has nothing to do with activism (cf. Luke 10:38-42). It instead continually flows from contemplation, like in Mary’s attitude, who stays at the Lord’s feet and listens to him.

The more one clings to the Lord, the more his action reaches far away: “Even when the heart wrings itself it takes blood to the whole body: it’s its vital movement of systole and diastole” (S. Fausti).

\* By listening the disciple becomes an apostle. Mission is that very same one of Jesus’: “To preach and to expel demons”. God’s holiness is learnt by contemplating it and experiencing it in person (cf. John 4:42; Mark 5:18; 1 John 1:1-4).

The election (priesthood, consecration) is never a reason of privilege upon which to cling oneself, but it's a Service towards everybody.

\* "Souls are saved with holiness. Wanting to make others good without we being good is wanting the impossible. Nobody can give what he hasn't got. We can administer a sacrament even if we aren't saints; but to convert souls, no. It's what our missionaries of Africa experience every day: certain conversions aren't obtained other than with holiness. This comes about because God doesn't ordinarily concede to touch the pagans' hearts by whoever isn't united to Him with great charity [...]. Whoever doesn't have a burning charity, can't pass it on [...]. Union with God mustn't be neglected, one's own holiness mustn't be sacrificed in order to attend to others. And if a missionary in order to attend to others were in danger of losing the spirit, he should rather withdraw himself" (VS 113).

### **MEDITATIO**

*(what does the Word say to me)*

\* "Here, oh my dear ones, is the holiness which I would like from you: not miracles but to do everything well. To make ourselves saints in the ordinary way. The Lord, who has inspired this foundation, has even inspired the practices, the means in order to acquire perfection and to make ourselves saints. If He will want to lift us up to other heights, He will think about it, let us not bother about it. Some people always seek big, extraordinary things. It isn't seeking for God, because He's just as much in big things as He is in small things; therefore we have to be careful in doing everything well. The saints are saints not because they performed miracles, but because "bene omnia fecerunt". Don't ask the Lord for the grace to perform miracles: it's one of those graces that the Lord only gives to whoever he wants, and which aren't at all necessary for our holiness. I don't want this to be the house of miracles; we have so many other things to do, before performing miracles. The miracle which I want from you, is to do everything with perfection, from morning 'til evening. It was written of St. J. Cafasso "that he was extraordinary in the ordinary". Cause isn't often given for extraordinary things; instead the ordinary recur every day and the whole day. I'm not interested in whether you will have administered ten thousand baptisms, but rather in whether you will have been excellent religious, excellent missionaries, very fervent, very faithful, very accurate. Yes, "very" in everything. Not extraordinary things, but extraordinary in the ordinary. Let us be saints without clamour. It's not doing a lot of things that matters, but doing them well!" (Vs 129-130).

\* "We cannot be authentic missionaries without the tension towards holiness": mission is first of all this (cf. Ephesians 1:4). Do I feel it as a need, or do I find myself reclined in mediocrity and in superficiality? (cf. XCG 32).

\* K. Rahner affirmed in 1970: "On the Church's future, we absolutely need spiritual men". H.U. von Balthasar adds: "The miracle would simply be holiness. That of a man who in God has really taken conscience of himself, to the point of esteeming God as the only important reality. Or even still that of a man who allows the Holy Spirit to intervene upon him, so that he can then be the

minister of the Spirit with regards to his brothers, open them up to the grace of the living God, give them a loving, sweet, requiring word”.

For a serious and fertile spiritual life journey, the question of abundant and faithful prayer imposes itself.

Activism is an illness and is fought against: “Take care of yourself” (1 Timothy 4:16). Saint Charles Borromeo would suggest to his priests: “Do you look after souls? Don’t neglect yourself for this reason, and don’t give yourself to others right to the point that there’s nothing left of yourself. You must certainly be mindful of the souls of which you are the pastor, but not to forget about yourself”. We have the need to lead a harmonious style of life, where there’s time and space for one’s health, rest, study, human relations, spiritual life, apostolic life, economy.

### **ORATIO**

*(what does the Word make me say)*

*Reparation:*

“Certain conversions aren’t obtained other than with holiness” (Vs 113).

Lord, have mercy!

*Thanksgiving:*

“He calls those whom he had at heart” (cf. v. 13). I’ve always been in your heart, even before you were born (cf. Jeremiah 1:5).

“The missionary vocation belongs to those who really love the Lord. Therefore I want you to be saints and as missionaries saints in a superlative way”.

Thank you!

*Spirit’s request:*

“I want to be a saint, a great saint, soon a saint: missionaries request who aren’t perfect can’t be tolerated”.

Come, Holy Spirit!

### **CONTEMPLATIO**

*(“The Lord speaks and everything is done, orders and everything exists” [Psalm 32:9])*

\* “Those whom he wanted”: I’m in his heart.

\* “They went to him”: I’ll go to him, I’ll say “yes!” to him.

\* “In order to be with him” (v. 14): I too “have been seized by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12).

\* “The primary aim of our Institute is our holiness, then the conversion of the infidels; first we and then the others. Missionaries yes, but saints [...]. Whoever were to say: “I’ve come in order to make myself a missionary and that’s it!” is wrong. No, my dear, it isn’t enough at all. First of all you have come in order to make yourself a saint; the terms mustn’t be changed” (VS 111).

### **COMMUNICATIO**

*(first and only addressee of the Word is the people of God)*

\* “Leftovers aren’t sent to the missions, but rather the best. The little fruit of mission can very well depend upon us, that we aren’t suitable instruments in God’s hands. I’m not saying that it’s always like this, but it’s sure that if we were really saints, the Lord would use us in order to work a greater number of conversions and more stable. The conversion of souls is an entirely supernatural thing; the more we will be intimate friends of Jesus, the more we’ll be able to hope in the intervention of His grace” (VS 115).

\* “If missionaries, from whatever country they’re from, aren’t holy, it’s better that they stay at home” (P. Manna).