Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer # 66 – September 1, 2009

The Storms of Our Life

There are two lakes in Palestine. One, The Dead, is in permanent calmness. There are no waves or tempests there. The other, Genesareth, every year takes several human lives: tremendous and unexpected, the tempest arises, the winds shake it up, its waves rise up ominously. Nevertheless, fishermen choose this second lake because in the Dead Sea you never see a boat since there is no sign of life there. In the Gennesaret Lake, the risk is compensated with abundant fishing.

Jesus also chose for his apostles the lake where there is risk and life. Fruitful and abundant life includes risk, cross, and failure; therefore, He tells them straightforward: you will struggle.....you will suffer.....you will be flogged.....you will die violently.....you will be hated because of my name and you will be persecuted from city to city.

The boat is an ancient symbol of the Church. Throughout the centuries, this boat went through many storms which alternated between times of calmness and tranquility. We know that these storms will not end until the end of time.

Something similar can also be said about the communities, families, and persons of each one of us. The boat of our life crosses many storms. It is inevitable. It belongs to human existence. For example, let us think about the storms of:

- Family life: material problems, difficulties in the marriage, difficulties in the children’s education
- Professional life: lack of employment, retirement losses, injustices
- Religious life: crises and doubts of faith, disillusionments with priests, distance with God and the Church
- Personal life: physical or psychological limitations, illnesses, temptations, enmities, blows of destiny like the death of a loved one

In these storms of life, we Christians should distinguish ourselves from others. We know that we are not alone in the boat of our life. We know Jesus accompanies us – even when it may seem that He is not concerned about us. Faith tell us that He watches over us because He promised, He is within our own boat.

God is faithful to his promise, but God can be as He was in Peter’s boat, that is, asleep (Mt 8, 23). Peter tried to struggle alone against the tempest. At the height of the anxiety, he remembered that the Lord was present and he awakened Him. It happens to us this way also: we forget He is present, we let Him continue sleeping. We want to struggle alone and as soon as we are desperate, we remember the passenger who is most important.

God is a God of life. He is always present in our life. He is especially present when we need Him the most: amid the storms. As it happened to the apostles on the lake, in these moments it is more difficult to believe in His presence.

Because faith is not accepting articles of faith: it is believing in a person.....it is believing in Jesus Christ.....it is trusting in Him.....it is entrusting ourselves to Him. Faith is a personal act, between persons, between God and man. It is an act of confidence, of surrender, it is following totally and without limits.

Therefore, the meaning of storms in our life is: proving our faith in an extreme situation; getting closer to God and placing all our confidence in Him.

In the teaching of the risk of Jesus, the cross and suffering are necessary for the final triumph. Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord to help us grow in our faith and that He give us heroic confidence amidst the storms of our life.

Questions for reflection

1. What is our attitude when facing failure, cross and risk?
2. Have we made it a part of our life, something necessary and inclusive like the key to our fruitfulness?
3. Do I think of Jesus when there are problems?

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