

Wednesday, 14 October 2015 at 13,45
3rd Asian Apostolic Congress on Mercy
Hotel Santika Dyandra in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia

Jesus is Mercy, His Mercy as a Priest, as Prophet and as Pastor

My brothers and sisters in Christ, have you asked yourselves: are we secured in this world? Are you at peace in your place? Are we in harmony with our community and with one another?

Yes, all around us tells us of conflicts and crises. And we ourselves are sometimes being tried, tested and even tempted. Sometimes we are in pain or carrying immense problems. We are sometimes in distress and even discouraged. Others experience being rejected or being ridiculed. Yes, we suffer, or even in sorrow.

Whom we turn to? It is only Jesus, it is always Jesus. There is always assurance from Jesus. Jesus is always there waiting for us and ready to welcome us.

Much more Jesus is walking with us or walking towards us. With His caring eyes, Jesus is telling us, inviting us *“come to me, all you who work hard and who carry heavy burdens and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest”* (Matthew 11,28-29)

Jesus is mercy. To come to Jesus is to experience His mercy. To take Jesus is to live His mercy. The very life of Jesus is mercy. Jesus is mercy for us. Mercy is His mission. And this mercy of Jesus is His threefold office.

First, the mercy of Jesus as priest
Second, the mercy of Jesus as prophet
And lastly, the mercy of Jesus as pastor

First, it is the mercy of Jesus as priest. Saint Paul in his letter to the Hebrews affirms that *“we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God”* (4,14). And Saint continued as High Priest, *“appointed to be their representatives before God to offer gifts and sacrifices for the sins”* (5,1). The mercy of Jesus as priest is shown to us when He **suffered** for us and when He **saved** us.

- a. In His suffering. He suffered in the sense that He stripped Himself of His divinity and assumed our humanity thus becoming powerless. He suffered in the sense that he was physically and verbally abused. He was whipped and crowned with thorns and finally was crucified. Such humiliation is unthinkable for the Son of God but Jesus suffered all these for our sake. Why? He took pity on us. He heard our cry *“have mercy on us.”* It was His mercy that undertook everything and accepted all those sufferings. His mercy is His love for us. Jesus’ death was a sacrificial offering to reconcile us with the Father and to atone for our sins.

- b. In saving us. When Jesus willingly offered Himself on the cross, he won for us the love and forgiveness of the Father. Jesus, by His death, saved us from the dominions of Satan and rescued us from death. Saint Luke in his Gospel affirms, *“the son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost”* (19,10). He has reconciled us to the Father. He has united us with the Father. His mercy is our salvation.

Now, my brothers and sisters let us remember that by our baptism we share in the priesthood of Jesus. It is also our own mercy that we are willing to suffer for others rather than to inflict sufferings on them or become a source of sufferings to them. It is now our own mercy which compels us to save our brothers and sisters. And to save them is to make them safe and stable in life, living with dignity as children of God. Who are still out there for us to serve and to save?

A Filipina mother was waiting for her son. The son should be home by now. He was always on time for dinner. The mother was already worried. After few hours the son finally arrived. He looked very tired yet very contented. *“Mom, I am so sorry. I kept you waiting. I should have called you”* the son apologized.

“What kept you so long?” the mother wanted to know. The son answered, *“I passed by the supermarket. I bought some groceries worth thirty euros. I went to the Westbahnhof Main train Station. I helped and served food to the migrants and refugees there.”*

“Where did you get the money?” the mother continued to ask. The son replied, *“I saved the allowance you gave me today.”* And from that moment the mother was happy and felt very proud of her son who at his early age was already kindhearted and merciful to those in search of safety and shelter. The mother remembered that she is also a migrant worker in Vienna, Austria.

Second, it is the mercy of Jesus as prophet. Jesus in His public ministry was always teaching and preaching. Saint Matthew tells us that *“Jesus had entered the Temple and was teaching...”* (21,23; Luke 13,10). Even the Pharisees acknowledged Jesus as *“an honest man and truly teach God’s way”* (Matthew 22,16). God the Father confirms Jesus and urges us *“this is my Son, my Beloved, listen to him”* (Mark 9,7). In Biblical term, *“prophet”* refers to a person who speaks for God and in His name. He proclaims the Word of God to all, not only through his words, but much more through his actions, his lifestyle. Presbyterorum Ordinis attests that *“Jesus is the great Prophet who proclaimed the Kingdom of his Father by the testimony of his life and the power of his words* (35). The mercy of Jesus as prophet is shown to us as first, He was **speaking** about God and second, He is always **showing** to us the goodness of God.

- a. Jesus is speaking to us. The words of Jesus are words of full of compassion and concern. His words save. His words soothe our hearts and heal our hurts. That is His mercy. Words of Jesus forgive. Words of Jesus express how much He loves us. His words are truth. His words are life. Jesus was not afraid to confront the powerful. He courageously stood for the people who are the least, lost and the last in the society. Jesus did not compromise what is true, what is right and what is moral. This is our act of mercy. We speak about Jesus and for Jesus. We don’t remain silent. We speak and stand up in the name of Jesus. And we back up our words with our good works, with our merciful acts of charity.

- b. Jesus is showing us the Father. All the words and works of Jesus point to the Father, and not to Himself. Jesus attributes everything to the Father. With His words and works manifest the goodness of the Father, and portray only the greatness and glory of the Father.

Now, before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He commanded us *“go, therefore...and teach them to fulfill all that I have commanded you. I am with you always until the end of this world”* (Matthew 28, 20). So we have duty to teach. We have to preach. We should be prophets to others. Let us ask ourselves: what do people would like to hear from us and see from us? What do our family and friends like to hear from us, and see from us? And what then we must truly tell them and show to them?

Abdullah al Maglooth has a flower and gift shop business in Jeddah. He has migrant workers. And his migrant workers left for home vacation. Abdullah confessed, *“when they left. I felt as if I had lost my arms. I was so sad that I lost my appetite. He said, whenever and wherever I see migrant workers in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia I wonder what our life would be without them.”*

And lastly, it is mercy of Jesus as pastor. From the Gospel of Saint John, Jesus proclaims *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep”* (10,11). The term *“pastor”* comes from the Latin word *pastor, oris* which means *“shepherd”*. In the Old Testament the word *“pastor”* is used in reference to God, who is considered the Good Shepherd (Psalm 23, 1ff). As pastor Jesus leads us to the Father. He brings us to safety. He gives us the fullness of life. Without Jesus in our life, we are lost in this world. Without Jesus, there is no hope, there is no help, and eventually no healing. Indeed we need Jesus in our life and in this world. Only in Jesus as our pastor or shepherd we can find the true way to the Father, the way to holiness and finally to Heaven. The mercy of Jesus as pastor is made manifest first, by His **sustaining** and secondly by His **serving** us.

- a. In sustaining us. Jesus reveals who He is and invites us, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in will never thirst”* (John 6,35). This is especially made possible in the Holy Eucharist. The bread and wine we offer in the Holy Eucharist become His body and blood. And we receive Jesus in the Holy Communion. When we partake of the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Jesus, we become one with Him, united with Him, and in communion with Him. With His mercy, Jesus nourishes us. He strengthens us. Jesus sanctifies us.
- b. In serving us. As a shepherd this is what Jesus wants from us and does to us. We are important to Jesus. We are all special to Him. We are all valuable and precious to Jesus. And thus Jesus protects us. He does not want us to perish, to be scattered and to get lost. He defends us. He provides all our needs. And at the end Jesus gives up His very own life for us, for safety, for our salvation. Saint Matthew writes that Jesus *“did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (20,28). In His mercy Jesus serves to save us. With His mercy Jesus suffered for us and restored us back to the Father.

Now in our situation the command of Jesus to Peter is also very true to us. We are also send by Jesus *“feed my lambs”* (John 20,15). Repeatedly Jesus reminded us *“look after my sheep”* (16) and *“tend my sheep”* (17). To practice the mercy of our Lord Jesus is not to lord over them, not to command but to

serve. To shepherd is to lead them to the source of life, Jesus Himself. And it is mercy to watch patiently and prayerfully our people, to welcome them back to our trust and to our community.

Sharing in the ministry of Jesus and answering to His call we are also shepherds to those people entrusted to our care. So we can ask ourselves. What kind of shepherds are we? We must remember that the adjective used is “*good*” as in good shepherd. It is not being cute shepherd, not famous shepherd, not rich shepherd but good shepherd. It is much better if we will be known as merciful and compassionate shepherd.

How do we shepherd? We pattern our ways with the will of Jesus. We configure our lives according to the very life of Jesus. We shepherd with mercy and not for monetary consideration, with charity and not in competition with others, and with compassion not for career promotion.

Let me conclude this reflection with this personal experience. I am assigned in a province, three hours from Manila. There was time I was in Manila. And I was informed a former parishioner was critically confined at the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital. I decided to visit her. In my haste, I forgot to bring something for her. We talked. We prayed. I consoled her about her serious sickness.

And before I left, I gave her the last sacrament. I told her, “*I am sorry. I did not bring anything like flowers or fruits.*” She replied, “*there is nothing to be sorry about. You gave me the best, and that is your presence and prayers. Besides, you brought and you gave Jesus to me. What more I can ask for?*”

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us bring Jesus from here out there, from Indonesia to the rest of Asia. Jesus is Mercy. Mercy is His message. His mercy is now our mission. Let us give mercy to all. Let us share His mercy to one another and to the world.

Thank you and God bless us all.

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