

# Pastor's letter

October 18, 2009

Dear parishioner,

“Teacher we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” (Mk. 10, 35)

Mamma mia! Can you imagine how much arrogance this would have required?

It seems strange but this is one of so many reasons for which I believe in the history of the Gospels. Had I been one of the evangelists, I don't know if I would ever have written about a fact such as this one, a fact of which one needed to be ashamed.

In this Sunday's Gospel, for the third time Jesus speaks about His passion and death. Jesus knows very well that going to Jerusalem will mean His death. For two of His disciples, James and John, instead, going to Jerusalem means acquiring power, honor and prestige.

How often we human beings are truly small! In reality we are just human! For James and John, to follow Jesus means to be better than others, to feel superior. Jesus, immediately after the arrogant outburst from these disciples, explains to them that His Kingdom is not the kingdom that human beings foresee.

So Jesus called them and said to, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.” (Mk. 10, 42-44)

In the earthly kingdoms the sovereigns misuse their power, they stamp out the people, they humiliate them, they make them feel less than nothing, so that they as sovereigns can feel superior, powerful and strong. But Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is not this way. In His Kingdom the first one doesn't command, he serves. In His Kingdom whoever has more power is whoever loves more.

After these affirmations by Jesus it comes spontaneously to me to ponder these two questions: When Jesus speaks about the way we should live in His Kingdom does He refer to the time when we are dead? Will we then live in the way to which He refers. Or does He refer to His Kingdom that we already experience now, here on earth where we live?

In my opinion this is the point. This is what Jesus intends for us to understand. He wants us to have experience of the beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven, right now, here on earth. How? By placing ourselves at the service of others with love and respect. It would be truly beautiful to have the ability to live this different

way our life; to be able to realize a piece of the Kingdom of Heaven in our parish communities.

This Sunday's Gospel gives to me the opportunity to talk about a topic that was mentioned similarly in last Sunday's Gospel. It has to do with power.

Someone might think, "Here we go again. Father Luciano wants to speak about something that doesn't interest me, that doesn't concern me. I am not a politician, I am not rich, and therefore I don't have any power!" You know better than I, that when we speak about power, we don't refer only to politicians or the rich, but to all of us, no one excluded. Power, who doesn't have it? Power is the ability to give happiness or suffering to those that live around us. Power to make others suffer, for instance when we return tired from our job, when we see our wife or husband with a long face, or when we don't have respect for our workmates.

Let's not forget the terrible power to kill with the tongue. The tongue that breaks out in judgments, that overwhelms and changes the destiny of people. The devastating power that covers with mud by condemning a person without knowing anything about that person.

You see how many forms of power exist. Every day, without needing to be political or rich people, we use our power with people that live around us.

As I stated above, it would be really beautiful to realize that we can start living now the Kingdom of Heaven, here on the earth.

In my opinion one of the great obstacles that we could overcome, not only us Christians would be the lack of mercy towards one another. It is strange! The human being has all the potential of being great, but not the power to become it because he is incapable of being merciful to all.

Writing these things brings to mind Pope John the XXIII, and that which he wrote in his personal diary, "I promise that of the people that I know I will say only the good. And if there won't be anything good to say I will be silent."

Each of us is called to give testimony to charity and pardon, starting with the environment in which we live every day- our family, our job, our friends.

Yes! I really believe in the possibilities of the human being to be able to start to live the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. I believe that every one of us has the power and the duty to make others happy.

Today is World Mission Sunday, our communities are to be missionaries of mercy, of tenderness, of service, if to today and every day say to the Lord: "Teacher we want to do for you whatever you need."

Peace, Father Luciano