

LECTIO DIVINA
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
CYCLE A

Mexico City (Mexico), Sr. MARÍA LOURDES PATRICIA HERNÁNDEZ GUTIÉRREZ, December 11, 2022.- "All these are messianic signs".

Mt 11:1-11

"When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and preach in their towns. John, who had heard in prison of the works of Christ, sent his disciples to him, saying, "Are you he who is to come, or must we look for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind see, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor; and blessed is he who finds no offense in me!" As they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the people about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see, a reed shaken by the wind? What did you go out to see, a man elegantly dressed?

No! those who dress elegantly are in the palaces of kings. Then what did you go out to see, a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,: Behold, I send my messenger before you, who shall prepare the way before you "truly I say to you, There has not been among the ones born of women greater than John the Baptist: nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

STUDY OF THE TEXT

The text we meditate on today is found after Jesus has sent his disciples out to preach and has instructed them how to act.

He has also told them the conditions for being his followers, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

After this, he went to preach in different towns.

John the Baptist announced penance and conversion for the forgiveness of sins. He was imprisoned by order of Herod, for telling him that being with his brother's wife was not right.

Although he is in prison, he hears about the miracles that Jesus performs, but his expectations of the Messiah are very different from what he hears. He expected a strong, powerful, righteous Messiah, who would bring freedom to the captives, and salvation to all. As announced by the prophets.

"There comes the Lord Yahweh with power, and his arm subdues all." Is 40:10

"For he is like a refiner's fire and like a fuller's lye. He will sit to melt and to purge. He will purify the sons of Levi and purify them like gold and silver." Mal 3:2-3

He seeks answers, he wants to know the truth, he wants to discover the message and mission of Jesus. Isolated and in the darkness of his cell, he wonders if he too must be converted to understand a Messiah different from the one, he conceived. So, he sends two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he is the one, they were waiting for.

Jesus' response is disconcerting, he does not speak of who he is but of what he does, what he does in people, all these are messianic signs. He changes the lives of the people with whom he comes in contact, restores their dignity, heals their illnesses, and gives them hope.

Then, Jesus recognizes in John a prophet, the prophet who prepares the way for him, the prophet who has set in motion the announcement of the Messiah, and for this reason, he names him as the greatest born among the sons of women.

MEDITATION

Like John, each one of us may have a concept and experience of God, from our culture or our way of thinking. The Gospel invites us to search here and now, to doubt ourselves, to ask Jesus who He is. To approach with an open heart and mind to listen to his Word, to discover his action.

It is not just a matter of knowing things about him, but of living a profound experience of his presence in our lives. We know that Jesus is among us, in the neediest, in the poor, in the sick, in the deprived and marginalized.

This text invites us to believe in Jesus, in his works and to know that we need him, to discover the newness of God every day.

He can and wants to heal our blindness, which prevents us from seeing our faults, our selfishness. He wants to cleanse us of all that prevents us from approaching others to live in communion and charity, He wants to open our ears to the cries of those who are alone, abandoned, who have no voice, who have lost all hope.

Jesus announces to us the Good News, the Reign of God in which the first are the servants, the greatest are those who make themselves small and recognize that they are in need of him, in which we all have a place, and we all walk together.

To believe in Him and to believe Him, to allow ourselves to be touched by His Word, to commit ourselves to His mission, is to commit ourselves to humanity and to our world, with small, daily, simple works of charity through which God manifests His Kingdom of love and saves and transforms the reality in which we live.

John the Baptist, Jesus says, is the greatest born among the sons of women, but he adds, "*the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he*". That little one in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one who knows the fullness of the manifestation of God, that is, Jesus, and follows him, becomes his disciple, and makes the will of the Father his own. **We are invited to follow Him; He trusts in us.**

PRAYER

Father, we thank you for Jesus, your Word and your presence in our lives.
Help us to recognize our blindness, lameness, leprosy and all that prevents us from living fully as your children.

Give us, Lord, the grace to discover your presence and, following the example of the Baptist, to seek you in order to know your will and make it our own.

CONTEMPLATION

Let us be attentive so that what we do in our daily life, in our encounter with others, manifests the love of God and his Kingdom.

To help us remember this, we can keep in mind the following phrase from the Gospel:

"The blind see and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Good News preached to them."