

New Brighton, Sunday 13th August 2023

11th Sunday after Pentecost

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Faith in Humility.

If we could only withdraw two words from today's mass, they would be these: Faith in Humility. One is necessary to receive the promised reward in Heaven, the other is enclosed into the first one, but without it, we will never make a real act of Faith.

“Faith is the supernatural virtue which is *necessary* for salvation. It is a *free gift* of God and is accessible to all who humbly seek it. The act of faith is a *human* act, that is, an act of the intellect of a person - prompted by the will moved by God - who freely assents to divine truth. Faith is also *certain* because it is founded on the Word of God; it *works* “through charity” (Galatians 5:6); and it *continually grows* through listening to the Word of God and through prayer. It is, even now, a *foretaste* of the joys of heaven.”¹

This excerpt from the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us all the details we need to know about this beautiful virtue which was infused, alongside the virtues of Hope and Charity, in our soul when we received the Baptism. They are called the supernatural virtues because they are directly about the knowledge of God. They are infused by God Himself, because we can't acquire them by ourselves: we need the help from above to be elevated towards Him. This is when is required the act of humility: our salvation doesn't happen through us, but we must humbly receive it from our Creator and Redeemer.

“This deaf-mute [of today's Gospel] is the image of the human race, which, since its original fall, has not heard the teachings of salvation or celebrated the Lord's praises. The Patriarchs and Prophets had longed for, and asked for the Incarnation of the Word who was to impose his merciful hand on mankind, afflicted with all manner of infirmities and diseases as a result of the sin of their first father. He had made them blind by looking, deaf by hearing, lame by walking and paralytic by acting contrary to the law of the Creator; they had all become sturdy as a punishment for his pride, hydropic as a result of his concupiscence, covered in leprosy because he had stripped himself of virtue, slaves of the devil because he had assumed to be equal to God, and subject to death because he had claimed to enjoy immortality.”²

But Our Lord came upon earth to restore and recreate our poor humanity so well described in this excerpt from Ludolph of Saxony. Jesus gave to the Church the mission of teaching us. We received from the hands of her minister the divine life, which makes us capable of God, able to know Him and to speak to Him.

¹ Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nb. 28, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005.

² Ludolph of Saxony, Life of Christ, Vol. 4, Chap. 90. Translated with www.deepl.com.

With this mass of the 11th Sunday after Pentecost, we are clearly reminded of this day of our birth to the life of God. St Paul presents us with a brief summary of our Faith, and the healing of the deaf-mute in the Gospel is part of the rite of the sacrament of Baptism.

As we are nearly halfway in the time after Pentecost, the Church is obviously calling to our memory what we celebrated at Easter, reminding all the graces we already received because of the bounty of God. Our answer must be: **I believe, we believe.**

“Faith is a personal act insofar as it is the free response of the human person to God who reveals himself. But at the same time it is an ecclesial act which expresses itself in the proclamation, “We believe”. It is in fact the Church that believes: and thus by the grace of the Holy Spirit precedes, engenders and nourishes the faith of each Christian.”³

Let’s not remain anymore deaf to the call of the Lord. Faith has been offered and given to us. In Humility we shall accept it in its totality, with all kinds of sacrifice and renouncement it may imply in our life. We still have some leftovers from the old man. Let’s remove them without sparing any, or we may be threatened to become again this deaf and mute man of the Gospel. This spiritual situation would be even worse, as we already received and knew everything for our salvation.

“Disobedient and ungrateful man is as deaf and dumb, because he neither opens his ears to listen to God, nor his mouth to bless him; but the powerful touch of the charitable Redeemer makes this double evil disappear; for when he touches a heart with his grace, he makes it humble and docile, grateful and devoted.”⁴

Our hearts needs to remain wide opened to the life of Christ, Life in Faith, Hope and Charity, all virtues well maintained with the constant practice of Humility.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

³ Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nb. 30, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005.

⁴ Ludolph of Saxony, *Life of Christ*, Vol. 4, Chap. 90. Translated with www.deepl.com.