

Seeking the face of God

This summer, I participated to the dedication of a building located at 425, Legendre St. West, in Montreal. Dedicated to the humble exercise of turning to God, the building is an invitation to pray Him extensively and to seek His presence through our past, present and future life.

As it was appropriate, we recalled the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem, in the second book of the Chronicles, and read an excerpt of the vision that Solomon had the following night, 2 Ch 7, 14 (Oecumenical translation of the Bible):

*"(...) if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, **seek my face**, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

"*Seeking the face of God*", certain editions of the Bible, among the Bible of Jerusalem, indicate in their translation notes that "seeking Yahve" means trying to find God's will in order to put it in practice and that the expression "*seeking the face of Yahve*" means above all the presence of God, incidentally to know his will, to know what is the good according to him. In other words, to try and find what God likes, and why not those who embody what he likes, who reflect well who he is.

Yet, the teachings of Jesus are a springboard in that matter. Without taking away anything, he takes us one step further in the understanding of the face of God. First, Jesus teaches us that de face of God is the face of a loving and forgiving parent. Let us think about the father in the parable of the prodigal son who returns home (Luke 15: 11-32). The other characteristic element is how seriously Jesus considers the fact that men and women are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). That brings him to make the love of others the object of the second commandment, as important as the love of God, upon which depend the Law as a whole, as well as the Prophets (Mt 22, 39). Therefore, all of us were born with a likeness of God, which we must try to release. And by doing so, we become for one another a path leading to God, a reflection of his face. Thus, our character will give credibility both to his existence and his fully benevolent nature. Seeking to let God's features show through our own faces is not only an object of spiritual growth, but above all a key factor in the growth of everyone we meet.

Finally, the consideration that Jesus has for every one of us will bring him to declare that whatever we do for any person in need, "*who are members of my family, you did it to me.*" (Mt 25, 40) By helping needy people around us, let us preserve this conviction that we help a son, a daughter of God, who ignores him or has ceased to believe in him. At the same time, we help them release the face of God, hidden under how huge difficulties to be, ... so many obstacles to life. The quality of our presence will be an invitation to believe in the supreme kindness and to continue hoping. May the grace of God that we see in his face, support us in that sense.

Let us take a moment of silence and interiority, and absorb the elements of a shared reflection.

- A word, an expression, a phrase that touches me particularly?
- I have experienced the face of God in someone and I want to share that experience?

A time for sharing

Together let us pray,

Lord God, the entire creation is experiencing a birth; it seeks to see your face without any filter and to perceive your ineffable kindness. In order to do so, you put on our path people who reflect your benevolence in the community.

Please accept to make us part of them, ensuring to spread peace, hope, concern and concrete help to miserable people around.

Lord, make us eager witnesses of your compassionate and limitless love towards those who are poor, lonely, suffering, disadvantaged or who feel unloved.

Make us aware of their vulnerability.

Also, help us respect them without judgement, help them without imposing, and above all, try to understand their deepest needs.

Finally, transform our acts of comfort and relief into seeds of hope and foundations for social justice, for the emergence of a civilization of mutual aid and a culture of living.

We ask this through Jesus, Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

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