



21. September 2020

“The virtue of patience”

Eph 4,1-7.11-13

Reading for the Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you therefore to lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you were called. With all humility and gentleness, and with patience, support each other in love. Take every care to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as one hope is the goal of your calling by God. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, over all, through all and within all. On each one of us God's favour has been bestowed in whatever way Christ allotted it. And to some, his 'gift' was that they should be apostles; to some prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ, until we all reach unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God and form the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

If we follow the daily readings according to the liturgical cycle, we will sometimes find texts that are similar. If this is the case, I will occasionally concentrate in meditation only on a particular line in order to try to understand it better or to deepen a particular theme.

Having heard today that Paul exhorts us to be patient, we can make some reflections on this virtue which is said to "accomplish all things".

Let us first look at God himself, for God possesses this wonderful virtue, which is perhaps one of the most difficult to acquire. The disciples of Jesus also went through this school, because often one is driven by one's own impetuosity and restlessness, wants to reach the goal quickly and cannot wait until the right moment has come.

When we look at God himself, we recognise the infinite patience that he has for us, his children. Who hasn't experienced God's loving waiting for us to be ready to accept what was meant for us. Let us think of God's patience to establish His holy order in our souls; His repeated admonitions and sometimes warnings; His waiting for the evangelisation of the nations to take place and for people to convert.

The disciples of the Lord wanted to bring fire down from heaven because the preaching of Jesus was not accepted (*cf. Lk 9,54*). But Jesus makes them understand that it is the sick who need the doctor (*cf. Mt 9,12*).

Patience means being able to wait until things have matured, until they have gone through their process of growth: In the case of the faithful who consciously places himself under God's guidance, it is a matter of waiting until the moment desired by God arrives and not anticipating it.

This patience can be practised concretely by taming everything that creates a false restlessness in us. We are able to perceive when we lose our calm, when we become too stubborn and stiff inside, when nervousness grows...

Patience is in no way laziness or sluggishness, which can be inherent in a phlegmatic temperament, nor does patience mean the absence of emotions, a kind of apathy. No, it is a virtue in which we must be trained.

So how can we learn to be more patient?

Certainly the best way is to see things from God's perspective. This is especially true for matters of great weight, such as – for example - the painful situation of the Church today for people who are able to perceive it. They wait until the ship of Peter sails again in an orderly way.

Certainly, we can and should intensify our prayer, make sacrifices, carry out helpful actions. But at the same time we must wait in trust in God's ways and wisdom until we see what the Lord intends with these painful purifications. We will praise Him for this and the best thing is that we do it now, even though it is still dark.

The same applies in many areas.

Let us always look to the Lord and not fail to do what is up to us, but wait for God. And if the expected time is delayed from our point of view, we should perform an act of trust: God has everything in his hand, our knowledge is limited

Let us hope in him and take care not to act too soon and out of anxiety.

It is therefore necessary to carry the restless feelings before God and let them be touched by Him. In this way the virtue of patience is formed, which does not

consist in ignoring legitimate worries, but in placing our whole person in God's hand in trust, and from this trust we can let a calm and security enter our lives.

When trust becomes our strength and our innermost drive, then patience becomes a shining testimony of an unconditional surrender to God, inviting others to win this precious treasure as well. Let us remember the word: “*Patience achieves everything.*” (Saint Teresa of Ávila)