

Charity towards social injustices

Even though we live in an age of abundance, there are many of our fellow men and peoples who are deprived of goods, because the worldwide wealth is not being distributed with a spirit of justice and with the fear of God. So, the international support programs do not suffice to cover their needs and many times there is a taking advantage of the available resources for other purposes.

It is a par excellence Christian duty but also a panhuman behavior to soften social injustice with the great virtue of charity, of supporting one another, without of course, humiliating our neighbor's dignity.

If all people, wealthy, and poor, would place the Lord's beatitude "blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Mat. 5:7) in their hearts, then poverty, deprivation and social misfortune would be lessened to a very great degree. Very likely there wouldn't exist a poor person on the planet, if Christian virtue would prevail in the way Saint Paul interprets it in today's Epistle reading.

Archim. Ch. N.

Sunday October 27 7th Sunday of Luke, Nestor the Martyr of Thessaloniki Kyriakos, Patriarch of Constantinople

First Tone, Seventh Eothinon, -Epistle St.Paul's 2nd Letter to the Corinthians 9:6-11, Gospel Luke 8:41-56

NEXT SUNDAY November 3 5th Sunday of Luke, Epistle St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9, Gospel Luke 16:19-31



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“THE GREAT VIRTUE OF CHARITY”

Charity is the most direct way of communication between God and men. First God showed the wealth of his charity to people so that he didn't hesitate to sacrifice even His Only-begotten Son to save the world. And Christ with joy, with a direct eagerness, in other words, and love approached the martyrdom of the cross, because from this sacrifice of His the great charity of the salvation of all people sprang forth. He didn't limit the magnitude of His charity, but with His blood He washed away all our sins. So for this reason also, the wisdom of the Old Testament says that "God loves a joyful giver" (Prov. 22:8, 2 Cor. 9:7).

The basic components of charity

The Apostle Paul distinguishes two characteristic points of real charity, a good disposition and generosity.

The joyful disposition of the heart which wants to offer also contains in it the sense of eagerness but also the sense of generosity.

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 9:6-11

BRETHREN, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

These two meanings make the virtue of charity complete. Because someone might have the eagerness to give charity, but to not give analogous to the things he has. As Saint John Chrysostom observes, the more wealth one has, all the more he must give. Because if the rich person doesn't give from the things he has analogously, then also even his perchance little charity doesn't have the analogous value. Christ told us that if our charity isn't distinct from and doesn't surpass the charity of the Pharisees and the Scribes of His time (but also of every age), then we will not be able to enter the Kingdom of the heavens.

Of course the Apostle writes that "each one as he is disposed in heart". The disposition however of the heart must move always in conjunction with the capability which a person has to give, to have mercy on, to help. Furthermore David says "have mercy on me, o God, according to thy great mercy" (50:3). When we are asking not the little but the great mercy of God, because the gift of the forgiveness of our sins is truly great, then also our own charity to our fellow man must also be great,

analogous to our capabilities. We should be, in other words, not only eager, but also generous in the performance of charity.

The recompense analogous to the magnitude of charity

The apostolic text is very clear on this point. "Whoever sews restrainedly, sparingly, his harvest will also be little. And whoever sews generously, abundantly, his harvest will also be great, rich". The more eagerness we have for charity and the more we give to those who have need, so much greater will be our recompense from God. God will bless our charity because we also-with a feeling of His blessing-did our duty to our neighbor brother.

The Gospel mentions to us how much the two pence of the poor widow counted in Christ's estimation, who "put more than everyone" (Mk. 12:43). Whatever widow woman had and didn't have, she placed it in the box of the temple. She gave her whole estate, she gave charity from her deprivation. In other words, when our heart abounds in love and mercy, then we don't consider how much we will give. Our fervent disposition to help urges us sometimes to give even everything for the sake of our neighbor.

Christ as the good shepherd, gave His own life "for the sheep" and His Father glorified Him with the same glory which He had as Son and Word of God. So for this reason also, whoever of us literally scatters, gives from his estate to the poor, for the sake of his love for God and for fellow man, this action of his will remain as an eternal action of righteousness. And the God of righteousness will justify him before Him and before men, He will give him eternal life forever. If the salvation of one soul is more precious than this world, we perceive how great is the recompense of charity.