

SERVICE

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE GOD WHO CARES BY SERVING
AND THE INVITATION TO SERVE BY CARING



WE ARE INVITED AGAIN TO LOOK AT JESUS AND TO LOOK AT OURSELVES IN HIM.

In what interests us now, to speak of the God who serves, we must focus on the word and praxis of that Man. Two texts touch on what is essential: the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) and that of the so-called final judgment (Mt 25:31-46).

In a first level of reading of the well-known Lucan text, Jesus is identified as the good Samaritan who, unlike the other two characters, stops to care for the wounded man who lies on the edge of his path. Theologically, we could translate it as an interpretation of the kenotic incarnation in view of care: God becomes man in Jesus Christ and “descends” into our history to rescue suffering humanity. In the second text, the Son of Man warns that our final fate is decided by the praxis of mercy (care) that we have exercised or not exercised with the various suffering faces. And then He adds a fact that substantiates it: the identification of Himself with each one of those in need: “you did it to me / you didn’t do it to me” (Mt 25,40.45). The novelty lies in the emphasis placed on the “to me”, which points to an identification, rather than a sacramental one: it does not say “it is as if they had done it to me”, but “you did it to Me”. From this revealed truth, it would be necessary to say that the one who lies suffering on the side of the road is the Son of God himself, and it is we who are called to be the good Samaritans who must take care of the pain that God himself is suffering in each wounded creature.

Francisco tells us...

"[...] I would like to ask you, for a few moments, to look at your hands. Open your palms, look at them carefully. God has placed in your hands the gift of life, the future of society and your country. I would like to draw your attention to a detail: all hands are similar, but none is the same as the other; No one has hands like yours, that is why you are a unique, unrepeatable and incomparable treasure. No one in history can replace you. Ask yourself then, what are my hands for? To build or to destroy, to give or to hoard, to love or to hate? You see, you can squeeze your hand and close it, and it becomes a fist; or you can open it and make it available to God and others. This is the fundamental decision, since ancient times [...]"

(Martyrs' Stadium Speech, Kinshasa, Thursday, February 2, 2023, visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo).



“I have not come to be served but to serve.” (Mk 10,45)

While eating dinner, Jesus got up from the table and did something surprising. He took off his cloak and wrapped a towel around his waist, then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with great care.

Washing the feet of another was, among the Jews, a sign of hospitality, it was a gesture of service and humility, and although it was not an exclusive job for slaves, it always required an attitude of humble submission to perform it.

Jesus had been teaching the Twelve lessons of service and care throughout the 3 years of his public life and this was an eloquent gesture and a direct invitation. He had come to serve and not to be served, He was among them “ as one who serves”.¹ When he finished washing their feet, he took the cloak, put it on again and told them, “You too should wash one another’s feet”.²

Washing the feet of the Twelve was just a gesture that led Jesus to love to the extreme, demonstrating that love (he had cared for children, the sick, women...) until the end of his death. A death that becomes dedication and service, in which everything is stripped away, giving one’s life for others.

And this is how a gesture becomes an icon of service, an image of a God who cares by serving and who invites us to serve by caring, with the towel wrapped around our waist, discovering around us so much to give, to heal, to do.

SONG: WE ARE THE WORLD.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3wNuru4U0I>

¹ Luke 22, 27

² Jn 13, 14

WORDS THAT PRAY

WITH YOUR BREAD AND CUP IN MY HANDS

With your bread and cup in my hands, I want to travel the roads and paths
least frequented in our land.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I feel invited to be good news
among my sisters and citizens.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I share what I have and what I am.
with joy and without asking for anything in return.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I leave the cenacle in which we are
to proclaim your dedication and the Easter that is coming.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I want to continue baking for the rest of my life.
and share it before nightfall.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I set up tables so that no one is left out.
of the banquet and celebration that we expect.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I want to get closer to the always hungry
and satisfy a little of your most urgent needs.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I don't care about the scandal of sharing
and make myself poor following your footsteps.

With your bread and cup in my hands, I wash and hug bodies wasted by our greed.
to anoint them with your perfume of resurrection and life.

With your bread and cup in my hands, the borders become a tent of encounter
and the cry of the excluded your gospel clearer.

With your bread and cup in my hands, we look for cenacles for those who are lost
and we revive your almost forgotten life and message.

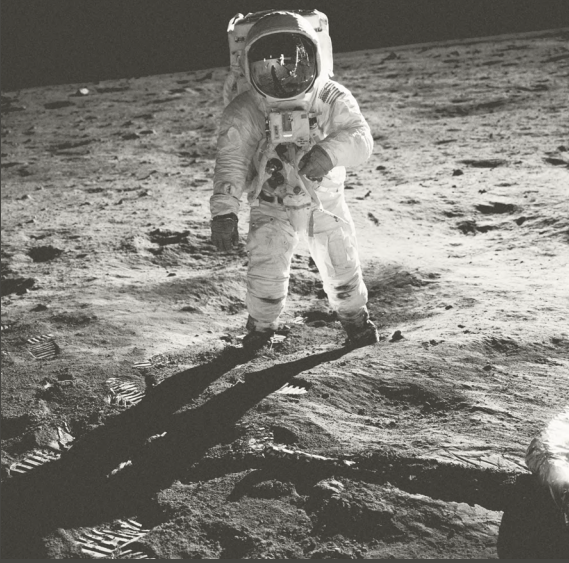
With your bread and cup in my hands, we announce and denounce what we have seen and heard
and we feel happy to be disciples and sisters.

With your bread and cup in my hands, we feel the presence of your coming kingdom
as a free scoop and urgent task.

With your bread and cup in my hands, we don't want to lose sight of you, even if you leave
and we long to commune with you in every brother.

(Florentino Ulibarri)





FROM WHAT WE ARE

If we spin even more finely, we get to the core of how we have wanted to understand and live service from our Charisma.

Service attitude

The attitude of SERVICE was so embedded in the experience of the VOW of HOSPITALITY that the Constitutions insistently repeat it. Sometimes, the word SERVE is replaced by: ASSIST, CARE, and ATTEND, but in the context it has the same meaning as SERVE.

This SERVICE has as its center the person, the WHOLE person, in all its dimensions, forcing the Sister, even, to expose her own life for “the health and bodily life of her neighbors.” This required that the entire organization of the house and the life of the Community itself be always based on the best SERVICE and the GREATEST good of the people they SERVE and that, in the SERVICE, the situation and demand be reached. specificity of each person, always seeking their good.

VIEW: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/5HtRUBiaJdw>



They begin by specifying that the Congregation has:

✚ “... as the only objective TO SERVE THEM and ASSIST THEM...” (Cfr. p. 76).

✚ “The great merit of those who charitably ASSIST the poor sick cannot be declared...” (p. 78).

Applicants who apply for admission are:

✚ “... will examine and test if they come with the spirit and vocation to SERVE the poor Sick” (p. 92).

✚ “... THEY WILL SERVE six months... as Probants” (p. 94).

In the celebration of taking the habit they are asked:

✚ “...do you have the strength to carry out the work of this Holy Congregation to SERVE and ASSIST the sick?” (p. 95).

✚ The applicant responded; “I know the honor I have had of having managed to enter the Brotherhood... for the BENEFIT of the poor SICK...” (p. 99).

The duty of the Superior is that:

✚ “... the obligations in the CARE of the sick are met exactly” (p. 105).

✚ “Twice a day... he will register for the wards, to see if the Sick are well ASSISTED...” (p. 107).

Coherence between prayer and life is requested. The fruit of prayer must be:

✚ “ASSISTANCE to the sick poor” (p.113).

The Sisters must consider this vocation of “SERVICE” as a grace:

✚ “How much we owe God for having called us and brought us to the Congregation to SERVE the sick” (p. 116).

They have to live their whole life in an attitude of SERVICE:

✚ “They will live... with great diligence in SERVE the poor Sick, which are our bodily obligations” (p. 121-122).

✚ “They will also take care of all their tasks, and particularly each of the Sisters in their respective ward, always ensuring that the Sick are well ASSISTED and lack nothing...” (p. 154).

✚ The Sisters “...will take CARE that the lovers live in peace and union with each other...” (p. 167).

✚ “Likewise, the girls will surrender to the care of the Sisters destined to be teachers, who will take the greatest CARE to direct them along the path of virtue...” (p. 169).



This service is of GREATER value than fasting:

✚ Consider that “the GREATEST fast is the ASSISTANCE of the Sick” (p. 123).

✚ “... the Sisters, in order to preserve their strength, which is so necessary for the ASSISTANCE of the sick, will not be able to give themselves as much to abstinence as others from other Religions founded for another purpose; but with everything, they will watch with great temperance, taking only what is necessary to sustain themselves...” (p. 146-147).

The SERVICE and the way of carrying it out are so important that every month they will review it in the “Meetings”:

✚ “Once a month, the Sisters of the year of Habit will meet to discuss the BEST ASSISTANCE to the Sick and will take note of the resolutions of the Board” (p. 157-158).

For the Sisters it is considered:

✚ “... medium guilt... being... little inclined to SERVE the sick” (p. 163).

The Holy Presence of God will especially help in the way of carrying out the SERVICE:

✚ “Let us seek, then, to carry out such a holy ministry, so that God may be glorified, the next ASSISTED, and our ZEAL rewarded” (p. 116).

✚ They meticulously detail all the SERVICES to be performed with the sick, dying... children... and how to do them. See pages 91, 124-125, 139.

BARCELONA MANUSCRIPT

✚ “... Well, what greater happiness can fit into a man in the world, and what greater happiness can he achieve than to SERVE and ASSIST in the King or his family in the prosperous and adverse... well... whatever you do... for the sick he receives it as his own...” (p. 1-2).

✚ “...He has placed you in his vineyard, giving you the opportunity... to merit ASSISTING to some, giving others food and drink...” (p. 2).

✚ “... you... do ASSIST and SERVE the sick with all care... you are martyrs with desire” (p. 2).

✚ “...keep in mind that Jesus Christ himself exercised... (in) ASSISTING, healing the sick” (Cfr. p. 4).

✚ “... well, it is true that the Brothers can give - to Jesus Christ - BY SERVING... (the) Poor...” (p. 11).

✚ “...the Brothers who embrace, heal and ASSIST with love the Poor are men who embrace Jesus Christ without danger of being deceived” (p. 11).

✚ “When there are sick people who need care, they will be ASSISTED in a particular way, because where it is most needed the Doctor must ASSIST” (p. 12).

CONSTITUTIONS 1824

There is a beautiful expression in the Constitutions of 1824 that defines this way of being: “ being aware of what is offered to the sick” (chap. VIII, p. 40): anticipating with our gaze the need of the other. This is very important and necessary with the poor, who often find it difficult to express their needs either because they lack words or because they are ashamed or because they do not want to bother them. And then this “being aware of what is offered to the sick” is the necessary condition of authentic service, which is nothing other than the most generous, appropriate and creative response to the needs of others.

Hospitality, the quality of the welcome, is also visible in the personalized attention, because each person is different, because each person is valued for who they are and because the specific need of each moment and situation is captured.

When you are “in sight” of people’s needs, you also discover deeper, more intimate needs than those that can be satisfied with external care. These needs may be accentuated or especially evident in situations of poverty, exclusion or illness; in the face of difficulty and adversity. Hospitality, described in the Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, aims for the welcome offered to make people stronger internally and leave them closer to God. This hospitality aspires so that, in its closeness, in its care, in its delicacy, in its details, the poor and those who suffer, those who feel excluded and abandoned, experience the mercy of God and can encounter the Father who also helps them. “He loves in the midst of his shortcomings and his pain.” (CHARITY MADE HOSPITALITY, HUMILITY AND HEROISM Darío Mollá Llácer, SJ)

CONSTITUTIONS 2011

The word service appears in more than 30 numbers of our current Constitutions. The numbers are worth highlighting:

- ✚ 12 . [...] we are called in Christ to live in community the divine filiation in Obedience, Poverty, Chastity and Hospitality at the service of humanity.
- ✚ 20. We live Hospitality in an attitude of welcome, availability and service.
- ✚ 35. [...] we give ourselves to God as our only ABSOLUTE, loving and serving humanity.



VIEW: https://youtu.be/2h5Rs_cixzo?si=0iR96ul-3-RVRxGs

REFLECTION

- *Echoes that the evangelical texts and resonances of our first Constitutions have left within me.*

- *What does “being in sight” of the Const. commit you to, currently? from 1824?*

- *Put your service to the test. What is your way of serving? What are you looking for in your service? Who do you serve? How do you serve? Is your service universal?*

- *What do you highlight about the document? What are you thankinkg for?*

In the manner of a psalm: THE PLEASURE OF SERVE. (GABRIELA MISTRAL).

All nature is a desire for service.

The cloud serves, the wind serves, the furrow serves.

Where there is a tree to plant, plant it yourself;

Where there is an error to amend, you amend it;

Where there is an effort that everyone avoids, accept it.

Be the one who moves the stone out of the way, the hatred between hearts and the difficulties of the problem.

There is a joy in being healthy and being fair, but there is, above all, the beautiful, the immense joy of serving.

How sad the world would be if everything was done,

If there were no rose bush to plant, a company to undertake.

Do not only call you the easy jobs

It is so beautiful to do what others dodge!

But don't make the mistake that you only earn merit

with the great jobs; there are small services

which are good services: ordering a table,

organize some books, comb a girl's hair.

He who criticizes, this is the one who destroys, you be the one who serves.

Serving is not a task for inferior beings.

God who gives the fruit and light, serves.

It could be called like this: "He who Serves."

And he has his eyes fixed on our hands and we

ask every day: Did you serve today? Whom?

To the tree, to your friend, to your mother?

Test of authentic service: joy in its exercise.

- "Serve the Lord with joy" (Ps 100:2).
- God loves him who gives cheerfully (Pr 22:8; 2 Cor 8:7).
- Providing a service is, above all, a grace received, and not a merit. Paul speaks of "the grace of rendering service to the faithful" (2 Cor 8:4).
- That is why gratuitousness (2 Cor 11:7) is so important for Saint Paul, especially emotional gratuitousness. And the Lord has commanded us "You received it freely, give it freely" (Mt 10:8).

