

6. Daily life filled by a search for sense

“Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:51).

Daily life remained the same for another twenty years, but the heart with which Mary lived it entered as it were into a new phase, deeper, more dramatic. Daily reality was even more densely inhabited by the sense of the things of God, as Jesus had reminded them.

But what did that mean? If they did not understand the word that Jesus had spoken, and if everything then returned to normal, what did it mean that all was changed, denser, more confronted with the sense of the things of God?

Everything is changed because suddenly their daily life was filled with a more acute search for sense, for a sense of the mystery of the Son, and a more dramatic look toward his mission. Mary treasured the words and deeds in a heart full of question, of silence, therefore of expectation to understand what she had not been able to understand yet, but which had entered into her life, into her awareness. And each instant, each day, each week, month, and year of those twenty years were already awakened to a new vigilance. All was on the look-out to be surprised by the impact on them and on everything that their Son's mission would have, and attentive therefore also to welcome the occurrence of the things of God.

In Mary this vigilance, this looking after the sense of the things of God, this desire to let them happen, to be open to this newness no longer with anxiety and resentment but with desire and trust, with hope, they were no longer worn out, no longer beaten by daily life, by the monotony of the life of Nazareth. We know this from how, twenty years later, she reacted during the wedding feast of Cana.

The wedding feast of Cana was a normal, everyday happening. Mary was there because the spouses must have been her relatives. Normal and everyday to invite her Son too and his friends. Normal and everyday that they drink a fair bit and, if they were poor people, that there not be much wine. Who knows, the “they have no more wine!” (Jn 2:3) might also have been a subtle reproach to Jesus, like that time in the Temple, for having put their poor relatives in an awkward situation by coming to the wedding feast with all these disciples used to raise the elbow...!

But in reality, even that recognition, “They have no more wine”, was heavy with the search for the sense of the things of God that Mary's heart had exercised all those years. Jesus perceives it, because he knows the heart of his Mother. “Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not yet come” (Jn 2:4).

Jesus perceives that Mary does not have an instinctive maternal relationship with him, that the word He spoke to her in the Temple, she had nurtured in her heart and awareness of herself, of Him, and of everything, also of this wedding feast, also of the wine that is running short. Mary always looks at Jesus with, within, the confession of

faith that He is here to be about the things of his Father, to fulfill the Father's plan. She offers to this position of the Son of God, to the sense of His presence in the world, all that happens. She has always done it, for all the years she lived with Him in Nazareth, even when she told Him, "Can you bring me up a bucket of water from the spring?", "Come on, lunch is ready", "Doesn't it seem to you your father Joseph is breathing with difficulty today?", "I have no more wood for the fire", "Our cousin James has lost a sheep in the hills", "Take some bread and cheese to Simeon's widow", etc., etc. After that day in the Temple, Mary could not say anything, could not think anything, without perceiving at the depth of things, of the relationships, above all the relationship with Jesus himself, the sense of the things of God that Jesus lived profoundly, which constituted Him, and which His presence transmitted to her and to all in every corner of life.

He had said: "I must be about my Father's business". It was not only a *have to do*, but a *being*, a dedication of his being, a mission constitutive of his person, of his heart, which demanded of Him a presence, a being present where the Father was bringing his will to completion, His plan, because the Father's plan, the business of the Father, were being brought about in the presence granted by the Son, granted to the point of sacrifice.

For this reason, Jesus too could not hear the words of Mary, her questions, her daily recognitions, without the whole depth of his sense of the things of his Father. He could not hear Mary say "They have no more wine", without hearing in those words, and in the situation in which they were expressed, the whole resonance of the sense of the things of the Father which made his awareness burn with love. For this reason, he responds, reacts, by thinking about his Hour, to his Paschal Hour, to that Hour of death and resurrection of which he will speak to Peter and his companions.

And Mary knows that this is the Son's position regarding life and reality, and she is sure, she trusts in her Son's being about the things of his Father: «His Mother said to the waiters: "Do whatever he tells you!"» (Jn 2:5).

As if she had said: "There is no need to understand beforehand the sense of what he will tell you. Neither did I understand what he told me when he was twelve years old, as I did not understand what the angel told me at the Annunciation, or the old Simeon in the Temple, but I agree with this word, to this proposal which also asked of me a way of being His mother that I had not imagined before. And I have verified, I have experienced, that this position makes all of life more dense and fruitful. One does one's banal, daily things, perhaps with weariness and dryness, and rather helps the things of God, lets Christ do the things of the Father. You will fill the jars of water, as you always do, because they are jars for the ritual purification of the Jews (Jn 2:6), and you have to fill them before each banquet, and behold, precisely this gesture, this disinterested service, He will radically transform by making it an expression of His saving mission, of His being here for the things of the Father".