

All the people were hanging off His words while listening to Him

Homily, 18th November 2016

Luke 19,45-48

father G. Papparone o.p.

I would like to focus with you on this last sentence: *all the people were hanging off His words while listening to Him*. This is one of the most direct and immediate among the evidences that have been handed down with great vigour and strength, one of those evidences that try to put us in contact with the most tangible humanity of Jesus. He is an extraordinary man, a man brave enough to challenge the authorities of His time, the fossilized religious habits, and the useless rituals, which were celebrated by people who certainly didn't have God as their priority. On the contrary, their priorities were their earthly concerns, as the text suggests, and as we can clearly see in this temple, that the people had progressively and maybe unconsciously turned into a market.

A business had progressively developed from a real necessity – that of sacrificing animals to God. Here comes this extraordinary man, a man who has the audacity to challenge the established power, the religious power, the consolidated power, a power that, at His time, was together political, economical, social and cultural.

The religious leaders and the scribes were trying to kill Him, but the people were hanging off His words. What a beautiful idiom: *were hanging off His words*, the people were literary fascinated by His words, they were listening ecstatically.

Nevertheless, my dearest, as we know from the dramatic conclusion of the Gospel, **to listen ecstatically to Jesus' words, to hang off His words, all of that is not enough, what is necessary is to put His words into practice, what is necessary is to believe in His words.**

Today there still are agnostic people, people who claim to be highly impressed and fascinated by the Gospel, but they don't embrace it! They live as agnostic indeed; they live according to their humanity.

And even regarding us, the people who believe, very often, too often, we live according to our humanity and not the word of the Gospel! We too are fascinated by Him and hang off His words, we might hurry to carry out (spiritual) exercises, we might hurry to pray in a church, we might recite the *lectio divina* every day, but in the end we still live according to earthly instincts.

The people are enthusiastic, but in the moment of the truth they will shout "Barabbas!". Or, they will just be indifferent onlookers of Jesus' death, anonymous onlookers incapable of taking a decision.

We often behave in the same way: we are anonymous onlookers in this world, without being able to spread true words of deliverance, the true words that the world is waiting for, that are the words of Jesus.

And we are not able to spread these words because we are not brave enough to challenge the established power, not only the social power but also our interior one, the one related to our passions. Our passions are consolidated in ourselves and have created a psycho-emotional structure, an attitude towards the fulfilment of our humanity, to the development of our own self instead of a life in union with God.

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Let's then ask the Lord to give us the light of His Spirit, His strength, to give us the capability and the braveness to break the schemes, to go beyond hanging off His words, to challenge all those interior and exterior structures that prevent us from living as children of God.

May the Lord be praised.