

*Turn my heart toward your statutes;
be gracious to me and teach me your law*

Homily, 7th February 2017

Psalm 118

father G. Papparone o.p.

My dearest,

I think that today we can pause and reflect together on this verse, which prepares us to listen to the word of God, of the Gospel, where Jesus reproaches those who questioned him, tried to deceive him and catch him out.

The Lord says that **the hardness of their hearts** poses some questions.

In this case the Hallelujah verse is providential because, besides the contents of the argument with Jesus, **the core of the problem is still our capacity to follow his word, to be stronger than all those forces that hinder us from listening to his *Word*, which can be summed up under the name of “hardness of the heart”, “fat of the heart” and “sclerotic Heart Disease”.**

That is, there is something inside us that prevents us from putting God’s word into practice, also when we want it.

We are often aware of that, so we can pray to God to help us.

Some other times, we are entirely in the dark and, consequently, we do not consider the problem at all. We might even believe we are right and think that we are doing everything God expects from us, whereas, instead, we may be far away from him.

Thus, this prayer is providential because it simply places us in front of God as we really are, so that we can ask him to bend our heart, to illuminate it, to make it meek, pliant, and humble.

Through the prophets, he promised that one day he would take the hearts of stone away from our breasts, that he would give us hearts of flesh, obedient and eager to be inspired by him.

So, let us pray together in this moment, I with you and you with me.

*Lord, you know our hearts
You know we are unfeeling
You know we are dull,
You know what we would like to do and are unable to carry out,
but you also know what we cannot do because we cannot even see it:
Our rebelliousness, of which we are not aware.*

Then come Lord!

*Descend on us, destroy this heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh.
Give us a simple and humble heart, so that your word could be listened to, and illuminate all our life.*

God be praised.