



The Holy See

The passage of the Gospel is well known. A grandiose scene of a universalistic nature: all the peoples, who live together in a single field which is the world, are gathered before the Son of Man, seated on the throne of his glory to judge.

The message is clear: in the life of all, believers and non-believers alike, there is a moment of distinction: at a certain point, some begin to participate in the same joy of God, others start to endure the tremendous suffering of true solitude, because, ousted from the Kingdom, they are left desperately alone in their soul.

The Italian translation (CEI) refers to sheep and goats to distinguish the two groups. The Greek, however, alongside the feminine *próbata* – flock, sheep – uses *èrífia*, which indicates mainly the goats, the males of the species. The sheep, who do not rebel, are faithful, meek, care for the lambs and the weakest of the flock, and they enter the kingdom prepared for them since the creation of the world; the goats, who want independence, challenge the shepherds and the other animals with their horns, leap over the other goats as a sign of dominance, faced with danger think of themselves and not of the rest of the flock, are destined for eternal fire. It is natural to wonder: at a personal and institutional level, which of the two styles do we embody?

Evidently, then, belonging to the Kingdom of God or not does not depend on the explicit knowledge of Christ: *Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison...?*

In the Greek text, the verb “to see” is expressed by Matthew with *òráo*, which means to see in depth, to perceive, to understand. To paraphrase: Lord, when did we “understand”, “identify”, “qualify” you? Jesus’ answer implies that it is not the profession of faith, theological knowledge or sacramental practice that guarantee participation in the joy of God, but the qualitative and quantitative involvement in the human affairs of the least of our brothers. And the figure of the human is the kingship of Jesus of Nazareth, who in his earthly life shares in all the weakness of our nature, to the point of being denied, persecuted and crucified.

Ultimately, the parable of the universal judgment manifests the secret on which the world rests: *the Word became flesh*, that is, “God wanted be united with humanity to such an extent that whoever

touches man touches God, whoever honours man honours God, whoever despises man despises God” (Elia Citterio).

Indeed, the parable reveals the supreme dignity of human deeds, defined in relation to compassion, solidarity, tenderness, proximity in humanity. I find in the verses with which Edith Bruck wished to bid farewell to Pope Francis (*L’Osservatore Romano*, 23 April 2025), the poetic expression of such humanity:

We have lost a Man who lives in me.

A man who loved, was moved, wept, invoked peace, laughed, kissed, embraced, was moved and excited, and spread warmth.

The love of people of all colours and everywhere rejuvenated him.

Irony and wit made him wise.

His humanity was contagious, it softened even stones.

What cured him of illness was his healthy faith rooted in heaven.

“Christian humanity” makes the Church a home to everyone. How relevant are the words spoken by Francis in his discussion with the Jesuits in Lisbon in 2023: *Everyone, everyone, everyone is called to live in the Church: never forget it!*

As the Acts of the Apostles tell us, Peter clearly stated: *In truth I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.*

The passage of the first reading is the conclusion of Peter’s encounter with the pagans, Cornelius and his family (*Acts* 10); an episode that, in a globalized, secularized age such as our own, that thirsts for Truth and Love, Peter’s attitude points the way of evangelization: openness to the human without reserve, gratuitous interest in others, the sharing of lived experience and insight to help every man and every woman to give credit to life, to creaturely grace, and, *when they see that it pleases God* – Saint Francis of Assisi would say (*Rnb* XVI, 43) – the proclamation of the Gospel, that is, the revelation of the divine humanity of Jesus in history, to call the peoples to faith in Christ, “mad with love” for mankind, as Saint Catherine of Siena, whose feast day in Italy falls today, teaches. Then the full value of the profession of faith, sound theology and the sacraments that enrich life in the spirit with every grace will be able to unfold for everyone.

May Mary, the humble handmaiden of the Lord who gave the Saviour to the world, show us the way of authentic discipleship and proclamation.
