**Celebration of the Eucharist**

Sunday 1 October 2023

Translation from French

Have you ever seen a child learn to walk in front of a table or chair by himself? For him to learn to walk, a child needs someone, a person he loves and a person that loves him. This person stands at his level, arms open, repeating: Come, come, do not be afraid; Everything will be fine! And, for the first time in his life, standing on his two little feet, the child rushes towards this person. He will fall, for sure; But with no consequences, because he knows he will fall into the arms of this person he loves and who loves him. Amused, encouraged and without any fear, the child will start again, until he succeeds. Then you won't be able to stop him.

This pedagogy is that of God himself, our Creator and the One who made us his adopted children. With outstretched arms, clearly visible in those of Jesus on the cross, God tells us: come, come, do not be afraid! Come forward! In this life-giving adventure, every time we fall, God is there to catch us in his arms full of mercy. And because God is love, with a sincere contrition, no fault can resist his tenderness. The path of life and salvation always remains open. Never mind 'that the first answer of the son who refuses to go to work in his father's vineyard' (Mt 21:28-29). Believe in his Word and change your option: from that moment on, start working in the vineyard.

God desires that this attitude and pedagogy of mercy that comes from Him be present and active among us all. Saint Paul, Apostle, writes to the Philippians: comfort, love and communion in the Spirit "have the same dispositions, the same love, the same feelings, seek unity" (Phil 2,1-2). Shared among us, God's mercy gives birth to unity and transforms the world by introducing into it the seeds of the Kingdom of God. This is possible in the Church because this is how we learn to walk with one another, at all ages, thanks to our sisters and brothers who open their arms to us no matter the fall.

It is difficult for the world to understand he who says to himself: "The Lord's conduct is not the right one" (Ezekiel 18,25). The world is in need to see a Church thriving to be faithful to unity. Therefore, the search for unity must be put into practice on a daily basis. The Synod we are undertaking is like a school in which we learn to listen to one another, a space in which the Church hears the words of Saint Paul: "Have within yourselves the dispositions that are in Christ Jesus"! (Phil. 2,5) Let us be a Church with open arms like those of her Lord on the cross and let us become true witnesses of God's love for the world.

AMEN

*Homily by Mgr Raymond Poisson*

*Bishop of St-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier (Canada)*