

7. Woman, Living Face of Christ: Seventh Stage

"The house was filled with the smell of perfume" (Jn 12:3c.)

The verse of the biblical text graphically expresses what happens to a person who has allowed *herself to be Christianized*. The author of the letter to the Corinthians says so (2 Cor 2:15), and Origen refers explicitly to this image to say that we are the aroma of Christ:

"If the groom has touched me, I also become a good smell, I am anointed with perfumes. And their perfumes are communicated to me so that I can say with the apostles: 'We are the aroma of Christ spread throughout the world.'"³⁹

To be the aroma of Christ means that there is a deep identification between the smell of perfume and Christ, so that Mary of Bethany is the image of the bride, of the New Jerusalem, and at the same time as a living presence of Christ; she radiates her smell with the gestures she makes. She has been anointed with the holiness of the Saint. It transmits the life of Christ by giving himself in love of service, and thus creates communion among all who are in the house. The smell of perfume brings them together in unity, giving rise to a common experience. "The aroma of the divinity of Jesus, floods the house of the world" Who can retain an aroma when it has come out of its jar? it is in the air, it is contagious, it expands, it is like fire. The life of the person who is at this stage is a source of life for the community in which she lives⁴⁰ (although she may not feel it sensitively), for the Church and for the whole world. Their relationships can heal, cast out demons, and breathe new life as Jesus did. It creates community around the experience of the Risen One, which becomes expansive. It is the time of great apostolic fruitfulness.

The profound experience of communion with Christ sanctifies her and leads her to communion with the Trinity, with the community. *The house is filled with the perfume in which all guests enter into communion.*

7.1 Affections and the body

Mary's way of acting, her gestures, words and actions manifest the life of Christ. She has reached the integration of the whole person in the donation. At this stage she loves herself with the whole being of a woman, in a sexed way, without fears or naivety. Relationships with men and women are from God and for the Kingdom. This is not limited to the coherence of bodily gestures. Relationships are the fruit of what you live inwardly, as well as the relationship with the materiality of your life. The person who has reached this stage is indifferent to having a long or short life, and takes care of his health to serve the Lord. It is experienced in universal communion with God, with others and with the world. This is transmitted in concrete physical gestures of reconciliation, of welcome, of forgiveness, of peace. In her the fruits of the Holy Spirit are present and she creates with her attitudes and way of being with others bonds of communion and love.

- What would I have to work so that my attitudes and gestures such as welcome, peace, inclusion, reconciliation were a manifestation of my following and total surrender to Christ?
- Is there a sister, brother in need of my peace and reconciliation?

³⁹ ORIGINS, PG 13.93. cited by SCHÖKEL L.A., *Marriage symbols*, 62.

⁴⁰ ORIGINS GCS VII, PG 3. Op. Cit. 56.

7.2 Relationships

The person who reaches this stage has been configured as a new creature, however, she must always be vigilant so as not to be separated from God. Their way of *relating habitually* infects the life of God; it helps to heal, grow, expel demons, reconcile. Her relational life, detached from herself, is fruitful in creating community and communion around Jesus and his apostolic mission.

There is an integration between the human and the divine, between activity and passion, between dependence and autonomy resulting in interdependence. At this stage one lives as a mother, sister, friend, companion on the way and at the same time, performs any type of activity to make present the love of Christ. It does not stop in front of roles assigned to men or women because its main interest is to proclaim Christ. Her life and actions are discreet, silent, humble, she does not put herself at the center. She reflects well the image of what the perfume does, the good smell is perceived, but it is not seen.

- With what gestures do I try to create communion in the community?
- Can I say that where I go I try to do good? What do the sisters tell me about this? What do they perceive from me?
- Can other people find in me a person who leaves a mark on them a smell of Jesus?

7.3 Women in the cultural and ecclesial context

In this stage of freedom nothing prevents her from carrying out her mission. As a historical subject, she is capable of a new socio-cultural construction of what it means to be a woman according to the order of grace willed by Christ. Her transformed life and her transmitted experience question the concepts that can be had about women inside and outside the ecclesial context, because her new life as an Icon of Christ is a proposal that goes beyond any culture.

- Do I listen to the Lord's calls to me to follow him and announce his presence in my context, within the community and in my ecclesial environment?
- Is there any that prevents me from doing what God asks of me today?
- What do you ask of us today as a Congregation?
- At this stage emotions that were characteristic of the beginning may also appear, but they are lived in another way, for example Fear, anguish?, persecution ...? In all this we win by the love of Christ Jesus!!

CONCLUSION

At the end of the personal and community process you will have realized that in the different stages you live an inner posture that leads you and leads us to feel, and to position ourselves with others in certain attitudes and affections, but the maturation of this inner posture leads to mature the way of feeling until all our feelings and affections are transformed to live a generous and passionate love like that of Jesus. It is important that you be faithful to the invitations you have felt from the Lord.

