

## **Obedience (May 23, 1999)**

At a time of lack of discipline and rebellion of children against parental authority, and in a society calling for the freedom of husbands and wives, talking about obedience has become an old issue. I know that the concept of counseling exists among believers; nonetheless, this concept does not really take place if the seeker of counsel is not willing to accept the truth coming from someone else. The truth always prevails, and counseling is not having many standpoints; but rather reaching a proper one that satisfies God, not the majority.

The Bible mentions obedience to God. As for obedience to humans, it is restricted to those who have the word of God, or who remind us about it. We do not obey anyone because of his rank; but rather because he says the word of God. Obedience through him is, thus, obedience to God. Within the Church, you obey the spiritual leaders because they are responsible for your salvation. Originally, they are where they are because they learned, before taking up this responsibility, to ensure your salvation.

Once I was preaching and I was told: "You are saying so because you are a bishop." (The person meant that I was repeating words imposed by my job). I told him that, on the contrary, I have been named bishop because of my words.

In monasticism, the spiritual father who is obeyed and who guides the monks does not fulfill this role because he listens to confessions. A spiritual father has acquired an extensive knowledge in Christ; and consequently in the human heart on one hand, and in the divine word on the other hand. Because he is not authoritative and has no interest, he guides you towards what is beneficial for you. Obedience is based on confidence in this context and on the faith that your spiritual father represents God.

All this begins with the obedience of the Son to the Father "...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death." (Philippians 2: 7-8). This obedience was the way of the Lord to resurrection.

Going down from the Lord to our fraternal relationships, we find that God wants us to be "submitting to one another in the fear of God". (Ephesians 5:21) In this call, we see that the elderly can submit to the young, the young to the elderly, the woman to the man and the man to the woman. There is no dominant category, and another submitting one. You submit to whoever says the truth regardless of what you think of him. You always submit to whoever has the Spirit of the Lord. If you knew that someone has the Spirit of the Lord, you shall submit your will to him.

First and foremost, do not reject a fair demand and do not close your heart in front of any asker. Listen fairly to those who argument. Be open to people as the Lord has said: "Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two." (Mathew 5:41) In this the Father may be glorified.

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