ENCOUNTER 02

Beloved

02

I am a beloved child of the Father

PASTORAL PRINCIPLE

Whoever knows they are loved by name learns to see people before roles.

Starting point

Before you serve, coordinate, teach, lead or bear fruit, you are a child.

And you are loved.

You do not have to earn a place in God's heart through your results.

Whoever knows they are loved can give themselves without having to keep proving their worth.

The Word and the faith of the Church

> "You are my beloved Son" (Mk 1:11).

> "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6:56).

Through baptismal grace we are children of God in Christ. The Eucharist nourishes this union, increases charity, builds up the Church and commits us to our brothers and sisters. God calls human beings to become, in the Holy Spirit, "his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life" (CCC 1).

IN ME · Serving as a child of God

Many wounds in apostolic life appear when we try to get from service something that only God's love can give us.

We need recognition.

It is hard for us when someone else takes our place.

A correction seems to threaten our worth.

Someone else's fruit unsettles us.

Whoever begins to rest in being a child of God lives all this differently.

They can hear a correction without feeling they are losing their place.

They can rejoice because someone else is growing.

They can serve without being seen.

They can rest.

They can even close down a beloved activity if it no longer serves the mission.

The Eucharist teaches this way of living.

Before sending us, Christ gives himself.

The altar reminds the apostle that he is first a child who receives, and only afterward a brother who gives himself.

MIRROR OF TEPEYAC

The encounter begins with a surprisingly personal word:

> "Juan, dearest Juan Diego."

Mary does not call a role.

She calls a person.

She asks where he is going.

She enters his concrete path.

Later, in his anguish, she will remind him again that he is the youngest and dearest of her sons and that he is in her care.

Before he is a messenger, Juan Diego is a son.

WITH OTHERS · Calling by name

Pastoral work can get us used to seeing:

- the catechist,
- the cook,
- the coordinator,
- the benefactor,
- the troubled young man,
- the lady who helps out.

Tepeyac makes us stop.

Before the role there is a person.

They have a story.

Desires.

Fears.

Gifts.

A vocation that may be much greater than the task they are doing now.

Formation often begins when someone discovers that they have been seen.

For conversation

- Where am I still seeking approval through my service?
- What changes when I remember that before I am an apostle, I am a child of God?
- Do I really know the people who work with me?
- Whom am I seeing mainly for what they do?

This Week

Inner step

Before a time of service:

> “Father, today I serve as a beloved child in your Son.”

Missionary step

Talk with someone in your own surroundings without asking anything of them.

Listen to something of their story.

At the end, tell them simply one concrete good you see in them.

Expected fruit

To serve from an identity we have received, and to begin helping others experience that they are recognized before they are used.