

Homily of Bishop Walter Heras

Bishop of Loja, Ecuador

Dear Fr. Pablo, dear brothers of The Work of the Church, dear sisters, dear brothers, all of you.

We are celebrating today a very joyful day. First and foremost, for the blessing of this house, which is a place of encounter, a space for formation, and a place of spiritual life.

This is our first joy, and within this joy, we also celebrate the “Easter” of Mother Trinidad with this work, with The Work of the Church. From this perspective, we see this act of thanksgiving, just as Jesus does in the Gospel: “I give you thanks” (cf. Lk 10:21). How beautiful it is to hear these words from the mouth of Jesus: “I give you thanks, Lord,” “I give you thanks, Father.” But why? He is also teaching us in that moment something very profound: to be grateful to God, our gratitude to Him for all the wonders He works.

But in this case, there is something even more special. Why does Jesus give thanks to God? Why does He thank the Father? “Because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them...”—to whom? “To the little ones.” Here we see the image of those who listen to the voice of the Lord. Who does the Lord’s word reach? The Lord always praises, He always teaches us: Who are His chosen ones? Who are those who truly hear His message? He already set children as an example for us, and He also spoke to us in the Beatitudes—“the poor in heart,” “the humble in heart.” This means having a poor heart—not the wise and learned, not those who believe they already know everything, but those who open themselves to the knowledge of God, to the love of God.

I believe this is the beautiful attitude that also identifies us within The Work of the Church, with Mother Trinidad. She herself said it in some of the messages I have read. She herself wondered: What did God see in me? She was not an intellectual, not a woman of great knowledge, but a woman who simply allowed herself to be led by God’s love. And from that love of God, she left behind an entire Work, an entire doctrine, a spirituality for those yet to come.

This is the beauty of Jesus’ thanksgiving, because it reaches the little ones, the humble of heart, those who are open—and this is also the beauty of Jesus. Many times, in contrast with the ways of the world today, with a world that closes itself off from the love of God because it believes it has already won everything, because it thinks it has solved everything, or because it believes it already knows everything. Yet, Jesus reaches out to the humble, to those whom the world often considers ignorant, to those it deems unworthy, to the “discarded,” as Pope Francis says in our time. Jesus goes to them. And many times, they have much more to teach us than others. They lead us to live with complete trust in God.

Looking at History, to whom has the Lord revealed Himself? Who has received His word? From the very beginning—who were the Apostles? They were not the kings of this world, not the powerful, not the aristocrats, as Saint Paul says. He tells his assembly, “Not many of you were mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things

of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong" (cf. 1 Cor 1:26-27). That is the beauty of Jesus—He looks at the heart more than appearances or outward forms. Today, we focus a lot on looks, on outward appearance, but we care very little for the heart. That is what we must take care of. Jesus goes straight to the heart of each person—to the simple heart, the humble heart, the heart that is open to His love and to an encounter with God.

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Ps 14:1), says the psalmist. The fool, the proud one, the one who thinks he has everything figured out, closes himself off to God. Perhaps this is what we see in today's world—the illusion that everything is already achieved, that everything is already resolved, that with the push of a button, everything is taken care of. No. The Lord Himself teaches us that in this world, we must be perseverant, we must be constant, we must be courageous. As He tells us in His word: "Strive"—He says—"Strive to enter through the narrow door..., for wide is the road that leads to destruction" (cf. Lk 13:24).

Entering through the narrow door requires effort! And it is an ongoing effort. The Christian life requires effort. It is not easy, it is not simply pressing a button, nor is it receiving a blessing and thinking everything is solved. No—it is a journey, a path of life, a path of learning. It is also a path of following Jesus as He Himself asks of us. How must we follow Jesus? "Whoever wishes to come after me, take up his cross, and follow me" (cf. Mk 8:34). Carrying the cross is the effort of the Christian life.

And Mother Trinidad lived this—constant effort, the effort of fidelity, of proclamation, of great love for Christ through the Church. For her, the Church was the center of everything. Where Christ's life is lived is in the Church. "Everything for the Church!" I saw a video that said: "Everything for the Church and everything with the Church!" Right? "For the Church and with the Church—outside the Church, nothing!" And this is the beautiful part—this deep ecclesial spirit that Mother Trinidad left as a legacy, this beautiful teaching. This love for the Church, this love for the Holy Father, this love for the ministers of the Church—I believe this is the most beautiful part. And this communion of life with everyone, with the Church, everything.

Without the Church, nothing. And that is how we must walk. This is the simple-hearted person, the humble woman who, through her life and her relationship with God, was able to grasp the power of the Spirit more than any great academic or scholar. It was simply her life, her deep relationship with Christ, that led her to discover what the Lord was revealing to her and what He desired for her mission.

Let us give thanks. May this Work, this house, serve precisely this purpose: to live this deep relationship with God and this deep relationship with the Church. The Church is the Mother who welcomes us, and the Church's head is Christ. We are part of this Church; we form His Body, and within this Body, with our diverse charisms, we form one unity. May we always live according to what she taught us.

Let there never be even a hint of division, because a Church that is divided is no longer the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ must remain in deep unity, for Christ is one, and so we too must be one—one community of faith and love. Our differences should

not be a source of conflict but rather a source of richness, for in them we see the gifts that God has given each of us. These gifts are meant to be put at the service of others.

Saint Francis of Assisi said: "Let us not be thieves of God's gifts, for these gifts belong to God; nothing belongs to us—only our vices and sins." The gifts God has given us must be multiplied—how? By putting them at the service of others. When we do this, these gifts increase. This is the Church; this is the richness of the Church. We form the Body of Christ, where no one is unnecessary—everyone is essential. No one can say, "I don't know what to do." We all have something to do, we all have something to give because God has given us much.

This is the beautiful Church we must care for. May the Lord grant us the grace to live in openness of heart, with a spirit of humility, poverty, and simplicity.

May we love the Church as Mother Trinidad taught us. The Church—this Body of Christ, which we must love and for which we must live and give ourselves. May we never be separated from this Church—the Church of Jesus Christ.

May the Lord grant us this joy, and may this house be a sign of communion, a sign of life where we encounter the Lord.

Amen.