

THE TWENTIETH FLOWER: UNCEASING MINISTRY

While I am laboring in your field, O Lord, and planting seeds to cultivate more laborers for your harvest, I have to remember that this field is not mine. It is yours. I have to produce, by your word that is planted in me, workers for your harvest. I am not a lonely worker even though you have chosen me, and by my will I became a vessel of your teaching, your ministry is not exclusive to me. My mission is to build up and be a part of your Church, your Bride, O Bridegroom.

I become, like all your workers as well, a member of your body. Each one of us has a task to fulfill using your bestowed gifts. We work in one mind, your mind. We work in one spirit, your Spirit. We are from many backgrounds and different ethnic cultures but we work willingly and freely in harmony¹ to establish your kingdom on earth that may become a foretaste of your Heavenly Kingdom. You are our thoughts, our Spirit and our food. We are personally connected to you mysteriously.

Every place we go, we have to meet with our co-workers. We have to greet them and see them. We have all to meet together to celebrate your presence among and in us, the remembrance of your act of love. We have to feast at your banquet where we break bread and hear your words and see your light shining from the faces of your believers. When we gather, we are not concerned with time. We are with you beyond time. We are intimately and ultimately with you. We set aside all our earthly cares with you.² We are not worried where to sit and where to sleep.³ We are concerned with one thing: to be with you. Your presence is what we are seeking and longing for.

Your field is so wide and extremely big. My labor is not limited to place, for your message has to reach each soul. I have to cultivate as long as I live. I have to go from one soul to another and from one soil to another in order to plant your words. My work does not cease. I have to check and consult with the co-workers in regards of this labor of love.⁴ I have to stay in tune with the assembly. I have to show them that I am still a member of your body. I do not form my own body. I do not form my own followers, but I am your follower and a member of your Body and therefore, I have to testify and declare

¹ Acts 20: 4.

² Acts 20: 7.

³ Acts 20: 9.

⁴ Acts 20: 17-23.

that all what I proclaimed is God's revelations to me from the moment my eyes have known time and place.⁵

My meeting with your members is an opportunity to declare that I have no fear for any tribulation, so they might take the same lead. I have to become their example in your faith. I have to encourage and support them.⁶ I have also to warn them of false teachings⁷ and to stay in the right teachings because the faith we hold is the assembly's faith declared by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit has made me and all the workers farmers, shepherds and overseers of the faithful.⁸ We become responsible of these souls and soils. They will be the fruit of your love.

My ministry therefore, my Lord, is to give rather than to receive.⁹ My ministry as well as the ministry of all your shepherds is your ministry of love, of giving the self for the life of the other. My ministry is a sacrificial action for your name's sake and your glory. It is not bound by silver or gold. It is bound by love, by tears, by prayers, by hard work, by devotion, by forgiveness, by repentance and by vigilance. It is bound by you.

You have appointed me to take care of your field. You gave me a treasure in which I shall place my heart. You gave me this inherited treasure and I have to give back this treasure with interest to you.¹⁰ I have to deliver this treasure, this inheritance, to the co-members of your body. I have to entrust it to them with the same trust that you entrusted me with. The trust is in you in the first place. You are the owner of everything. You own me and all the others.

You are the main worker of your field. We are but workers by your Spirit and your gifts. We are but managers of your wealth. We are but users of your grace. We are but lovers of your love. Keep us, O Lord, under your protection, support and guidance. Be our eyes, ears, hands and physical bodies so that we become perfect workers in your field. We pray and "we give thanks unto Thee, O Lord God of Powers, who hast accounted us worthy to stand even now before your altar, and fall down before Thy compassions for our sins and the errors of the people. Accept our supplications. O God; make us worthy

⁵ Acts 20: 27.

⁶ Acts 20: 24.

⁷ Acts 20: 29.

⁸ Acts 20: 28.

⁹ Acts 20: 35.

¹⁰ Acts 20: 32.

to offer unto Thee prayers and supplications...and enable us, whom Thou hast placed in this thy ministry, by the power of the Holy Spirit, blamelessly and without offense, in the pure witness of our conscience, to call upon Thee at all times and in every place: that hearing us Thou mayest show mercy upon us according to the plenitude of thy goodness....”¹¹

¹¹ The First Prayer of the Faithful in the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great.S