

THE TWENTY SECOND FLOWER: A PAIFUL BUT JOYFUL EXPERIENCE

The ministry of love that you endowed and entrusted to me, is not an easy endeavor but yet it is a joyful experience. It is an experience and a test of my faith. It is the honor of speaking in your name. It is the blessing of the flowing of your words through my lips. It is the illumination of my being by the light of the Holy Spirit. It is a reflection of your image and your likeness.

The labor of love is taking every opportunity to deliver these extraordinary and overwhelming experiences. My humility is the key of this joyful and blessed experience. My free submission to your will is the base by which I receive your powers and encounter your grace. This humility empowers me to stand and conquer the world. I can stand and confront my oppressors¹ and deliver to them the right teaching. It enables me to use your grace and your talents, to use your tongue to defend my case and spread your message.²

This tongue has made them silent to hear my background and my conversion.³ My defense was to convince them that I am the same person who was blind and then saw the truth. I am willing to witness this Truth, to this Way. I am this man who was willing to sacrifice his physical body for this truth. I am the man who had put himself in danger for his new illumination, a new revelation.

This is me, the one who is standing in front of you. The one you have accused and condemned to death. I was one of you. I was blind like you. I have accused the man whom I am witnessing to Him right now before you. I have condemned Him to death and even I persecuted his followers.⁴ But, I saw the light and I am convinced because this light has illumined my dark mind, which was full of prophesies that I did not see them fulfilled in Him. I did not recognize Him when he was among us, but His grace has chosen me, as he is choosing you, but I became His vessel while you are still in your darkness. So, stand up and arise from your darkness and deep slumber. Open your

¹ Acts, 22: 2

² Acts, 22: 3

³ Acts, 22: 6-15

⁴ Acts, 22: 4

eyes and be baptized.⁵ Put on Christ who we condemned because of our hard hearts and who proved by His Resurrection and Ascension that He is the awaited Messiah.

Brethren and Fathers,⁶ the Lord guided my ministry. He sent me to the Gentiles in a vision.⁷ You hold an image of me as someone who reflects the beliefs of the Greeks or the Gentiles because you didn't believe my testimony. I am in total obedience to Him who uncovered the darkness of my eyes and delivered me into salvation. I am, in my turn, trying to convince you, but your ears are blocked to hearing the truth.

Even with my proclamation and my testimony, the hardened hearts did not listen and continued their accusations. They did not take advantage of this new opportunity to repent and to follow the Way. They are accustomed and comfortable in their soils. They refused to bear the fruit of faith. They did not want to step out of their comfort zone of darkness to the labor of witnessing, the Light. They surrounded themselves with boundaries. They enslaved themselves to their egos and resisted becoming free. They would have to abolish their egos to gain the cross of love, the cross of life, the cross of the Resurrection.

Their hardened hearts have kept me bound by chains and in suffering. They have kept me from feasting with the Lord in His Holy Passion, on His way to Golgotha. Here my ministry is reaching its ultimate goal, the witness of love. This suffering is leading me to true patience under pressure. But, I trust in the Lord. He is my shelter and protector. My ministry is to continue with humility, enduring the blessedness of this labor.

Yes indeed, I trust in you, O Lord. Keeping me under your wise protection, I fear no one, no persecution, no death because Life is in you, and I have commanded myself to You. Amen.

⁵ Acts 22: 16.

⁶ Acts 22: 1.

⁷ Acts 22: 17-21.