

The Boldness of Migrants

Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9 (Easter Sunday)

April 16, 2006

The phenomenon of undocumented people flowing across well-guarded frontiers obeys a variety of sociological laws. It also brings to light profound differences among countries and political groups. Yet despite the complexity of the matter, I have sensed the even deeper laws that govern the look and bold behavior of every migrant man and woman. These deeper laws underlie an impulse that is born, not of individual initiative, but of a current of human energy struggling to make life prevail. When such an initiative lodges in someone's expectations, no force, no government, no person on earth can stop it.

And when the paths of concrete individuals converge with those of a whole population, you can imagine that this joining of forces produces additional energy that bears the individuals' lives along. Small communities are formed of those who learn to follow Jesus and in whose lives burst into bloom with passion for the Kingdom of God. Each day such people incarnate the values of brotherhood, of mercy, of the preferential option for the poor, of the vocation of service, everything they have heard or seen of Jesus, at the same time as they read scripture and seize on its freshness, in the light of the "suffering servant."

Faith in the Resurrection must have taken time to form if we suppose that the Gospels took their final shape a hundred years after the death of Jesus. The grain of wheat passing through death to give new life is the best metaphor of when this resurrection is about to occur. Faith and the mission of Jesus give no security to his disciples, nor do they offer them the solution to the challenges posed either by their own existence or by their surroundings. Each stage of the journey brings them a series of new challenges. Each stage leads them to "death" (empty tombs). Disciples are obliged to overcome obstacles that they would have considered insuperable in other moments and circumstances. But on arriving at these obstacles new possibilities open up, obstacles become thresholds, the imagination is awakened, and the old gives way to the new. Alternative dimensions keep taking form, as happens in all that is truly living. From the depths we discover, over time, that what formerly made no sense now foretells transformation.

This dynamic can embrace everything. Personal conviction is no longer enough. An "impulse" is required that passes beyond what we are and can be. Jesus' Resurrection welcomes us, according to the vision of Teilhard de Chardin, as a process both intimate and global. It has nothing to do with a particular moment, nor with a particular event. It is life itself in its fullness penetrating our own concrete lives. Those who are embraced by this dynamic allow themselves to be carried along by the boldness of confidence in the midst of all that is uncertain. They live with no greater strength than that given by their own weaknesses. They thrust forward in openness to communion, without losing direction in their most personal search for authenticity. This is a force that makes things grow, that weaves relationships, that crosses frontiers. It is an impulse of the future and of life that pierces the shell of staleness, rigidity, sterility.

Faith in the Resurrection of that condemned man on the cross continues to fertilize marginal communities so that they grow in self-esteem and in their capacity for

solidarity and justice. In this way they are able to confront the dehumanizing forces of the dominant system.