

THEORY U - REFLECTION



I ask for what I desire as we begin this topic



I pray that my entire being become open to God's grace



I imagine these texts being addressed to me, and note my response

Grace: that we remain attentive to the signs of times

The following excerpt comes from a booklet called "Winds of Change: The Church and the signs of times" written by F. Javier Vitoria Cormenzana for Cristianisme i Justícia.

«The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit» (Jn 3:8). With these words Jesus of Nazareth invites Nicodemus to hear the voice of the Spirit of God. It is his *conditio sine qua non* for being born again and entering into the Kingdom of God (cf. Jn 3:3,5). A similar imitation from the Lord reaches the Church of the 21st century in these times of critical crossroads and bewildering crises. But it does so in a very particular way. The Breath of the Spirit is not a powerful wind which «roots up weeds and clears the paths of centuries of assaults» against justice and freedom, as we have so often sung, thanks to the inspiration of José Antonio Labordeta. Nor does it seem to be true that «the seed of the new age arrives with strong winds», as Carlos Cano sang when commemorating that giant of solidarity with the poor and of witness to the Gospel, Diamantino García. Rather, the Breath of the God of the Kingdom and of Jesus of Nazareth has the resonating intensity of that gentle, whispering breeze which the prophet Elijah heard on Mount Horeb (cf. 1 Kings 19,9-12). If we pay heed to Dolores Aleixandre, the Church needs to hear «the voice of a tenuous silence» in an epoch and a space agitated by hurricane winds of every type. This task is not at all simple in the midst of such deafening clamor, but it is of vital importance for the Church.

With evangelical sensitivity and a wisdom that resembles that of hanggliders, the Church has to know how to identify the voice of «God's Breeze»; it must find out where it is blowing and in what direction, so that it can be carried by its currents and not by «other gusts»[...] The Breath of God comes surrounded by the fierce winds of change that today rush through our world. At times colliding, at times evading, these winds of change are always vying with other mighty currents which seek to smother them in order to maintain the «established disorder» in which we live. In this crucial historical context, the proclamation of God's Kingdom cannot be made if it is not accompanied by «the witness of the Holy Spirit's power, present in the action of the Christian community in the service of their brothers and sisters, at the points where their existence and the future are at stake» (Paul VI, Octogesima Adveniens 51). We understand the signs of the times as the echoes of the gentle Breath of God, and we stress the importance of inquiring into them and discerning them so that a re-born Church can today bear witness to the power of the Spirit and fulfill its mission of announcing and establishing the Kingdom of God, since she herself is «the initial budding forth of that kingdom on earth» [LG 5].

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

In what parts of my life can I identify the voice of «God's Breeze»?