



**“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”**

Student's homily
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Readings: Acts 4:8-12 Jn 10:11-18

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” It does not matter how often I read, hear, sing this sentence. It does not cease to amaze me. I see here everything I learnt in the church when I was a child. Everything I have dreamt Christianity to be; even the sense and meaning of all human history. I repeat it aloud:

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” and I feel shivers in my stomach, because this is a message to everybody who has experienced rejection. In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Peter applies this famous sentence to Jesus. His death on the cross becomes a symbol for the humiliation of all rejected ones. A symbol for every one of us when we were afraid of the others, when we were discriminated, when we were misunderstood, when we were hated. This sentence offers the perspective of a revolutionary hope. It shows us the way to a God that saves the weak even from the death. “The LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes”.

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” I, Arturo Blázquez Navarro, have often felt rejected, with no hope ever to become anything. As an openly gay, married Catholic man, I have often experienced that the Church does not consider me good enough. The official teachings consider my relationship to my husband as sinful. I study catholic theology, but just as a part-time hobby: Because I know my Church would never employ somebody like me. Even if I were to live a celibate life, the official line is that I

should never become a priest, because I “suffer from deeply-seated homosexuality”. This hurts. And many friends ask me why I invest time and energy in an institution that does not seem to like me that much. I don’t really have an answer. I just can’t do otherwise, because I feel being here, in the Catholic Church, is the right thing for me. Because in the end, I love being here. I cannot help but answer to them: “The LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in my eyes”.

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” The failed messiah, the criminal hung on the cross, has become the good shepherd. The gospel proclaims today that Jesus is the good shepherd because he is ready to share the rejection and humiliation of those he protects. He does not watch the sheep from far away, he does not save by making a gesture from the seventh heaven. No, we don’t have a good shepherd that does not share our sufferings. The good shepherd is the God that answers the most desperate prayers by entering the ugliest realities of the world. He does not fear getting dirty and stinky as a sheep because this is his way to make marvels out of us. The good shepherd lives and dies for being a good shepherd: He does not benefit from his political or his religious power to carry on with a hypocritical life. He does not raise the finger against those he considers less worthy but wants to bring everybody together. We can truly say about our good shepherd: “The LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes”.

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” Our faith is not a passive faith: We Christians are called to become cornerstones for the others. The symbol of the herd and the good shepherd has been often misunderstood as a call for waiting for a saviour who will solve everything, without any kind of action from our side. But our vocation is to give back to our neighbours what we receive: If you feel gifted, you can employ your gifts for the good of your community. If you see God’s love, you can love more intensely. Bringing it to an extreme: If you trust in God beyond life and death, you can give your life – only to take it up again. And in this love that transcends life and time, we will be able to say: “The LORD has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes”.