

6. October 2019

**„To realize the vocation and
some aspects of the Amazon- Synod“**

2. Tim 1, 6-8.13-14

That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift of God that you possess through the laying on of my hands. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power and love and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to our Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but share in my hardships for the sake of the gospel, relying on the power of God . Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, look after that precious thing given in trust.

The words of today's Sunday reading may encourage all devout Catholics to live according to the gospel and not to despair in the face of the increasing anti-Christian atmosphere that gathers daily and does not stop at the gates of the church.

We are all - according to the special mission - who gives us God, witnesses of the gospel, which is entrusted to us. *God who has called, is also faithful (cf. Thess 5,24)*, and gives each one the appropriate grace to testify the gospel in the manner he is instructed to do.

Timothy was instructed by St. Paul, to renew the grace which he received through the laying on of hands of the Apostle. Timothy was a bishop and therefore took on a particularly responsible ministry within the various vocations God gives. Paul reminds him with the words of today's reading in an impressive and encouraging way.

On this October 6, 2019 begins in Rome, the so-called Amazon Synod. Many of the listeners who follow my daily speeches will hardly know what such a synod is or different kind of information .

It would be beyond the possibilities of these meditations to report on the various aspects of this Synod. Only so much is said for explanation: It is the service of the Church in the Amazon, which is to be considered as the ecological lungs of the world and should be given special attention for various reasons.

A few months ago, a working paper was announced the so-called "Instrumentum laboris". Some competent cardinals and bishops, as well as informed believers, have strongly criticized this working document. Cardinal Brandmuller for example says that in some places of the text even the danger of apostasy (apostasy) is recognizable. Also the former faith prefect Cardinal Müller criticizes strongly some parts of the "Instrumentum laboris" as well as Cardinal Burke, Cardinal Sarah, Auxiliary Bishop Schneider and others.

I am aware that many themes of this Synod affect little the concrete execution of faith. However if some critical points of the working paper's proposals would become as some guide- lines for the church, it is good to know some of the proposals in the working document and also to identify the spirit behind those proposals.

We must not overlook the fact that the Synod of Bishops on the family subsequently produced the papal document "Amoris laetitia" which is still controversial . The Holy Communion, under certain circumstances, can now be given to people in a second intimate relationship while still having a valid marriage. This is not seldom causing irritations and unanswered questions under faithful Catholics. The convinced opponents of this papal statement are of the opinion that here the previous clear line of the church changed and thus the church is harmed.

In today's analysis, I would like to comment on two points that are discussed in the working paper and in the context of the Synod from representatives of a more modern direction of the church.

1. Because of the lack of priests in this area of the Amazon for example in Brazil, there is an idea to call married men to priesthood, and also women should carry a special responsibility for the parishes. Some are even proposing of the ordinations of female deacons and priests.

Even if there are married priests - we know this from Orthodox priests or Anglicans who converted to the Catholic Church - celibacy is a special gift from God to the Church, which has a specific value.

Through celibacy, priests are realizing the Lord's way of life and following concretely an this important point His ways. It is also very rich to consider the bridal dimension which lies in such a vocation. The priest, who reflects the person of Christ, is in a certain way married to the Church, caring for her, providing her with the spiritual nourishment of the Word and the Sacra,ent. Sacrament. He is completely free for

this ministry and does not have to worry about the concerns of a natural family. This aspect is very important, because it also gives him the flexibility to go wherever he is called and is not limited by any legitimate claims of relatives.

As Bishop Kräutler - one of the Amazonas bishops - showed his concern of the lack of priests to Pope Benedict. He received the answer that he should pray for vocations. The answer was in one line of a word of the Lord in which the Lord advises to ask for workers for the vineyard. Here it becomes clear that priestly vocations are the grace of God.

2. As far as the consecration of women is concerned, a decision has long since been made. Pope John Paul II had authoritatively declared that the discussion on a women's priesthood is finished, because the church had no power to change the previous rule. The Church is bound by the example and mission of the Lord.

Demands in another direction misunderstand the nature of the church and want to adapt it to the world. There is no right to be ordained, the vocation to the priesthood remains in the authority of the Lord. The Lord has called women near him, but not made them priests. Repeating such demands is useless, as well as causing confusion and harming the church.

Tomorrow, there is still a very serious aspect of the working document for the synod that has now begun. We believers should know what the shepherds of the Church are doing. Everything that serves the true proclamation of the gospel is to be agreed with our whole heart. But if there are dubious statements or even those that lead away from the faith, there must be a correction together with a spiritual resistance.