

24 October 2019

“True zeal”

Rom 6, 19-23

I am putting it in human terms because you are still weak human beings: as once you surrendered yourselves as servants to immorality and to a lawlessness which results in more lawlessness, now you have to surrender yourselves to uprightness which is to result in sanctification. When you were the servants of sin, you felt no obligation to uprightness, and what did you gain from living like that? Experiences of which you are now ashamed, for that sort of behaviour ends in death. But, now you are set free from sin and bound to the service of God, your gain will be sanctification and the end will be eternal life. For the wage paid by sin is death; the gift freely given by God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yesterday, in the reading, we talked about resisting sin and serving true justice instead. In the end, there was talk of a change of power, which leads to a complete change of direction of our lives. We can resume this thought in today's reading: "*As once you surrendered yourselves as servants to immorality and to a lawlessness which results in more lawlessness, now you have to surrender yourselves to uprightness which is to result in sanctification.*"

This word of the apostle can become a great motivation if one remembers how life was without God or for those who already knew God, but who still led their Christian life more or less lukewarmly.

You can discover the motivation in the life of the Apostle himself. Before he met the Lord, he was an zealous Pharisee, but blind. This blindness led him to persecute Christians. When the Lord appeared to him and Paul followed him overwhelmed, he became a great apostle. Surely he knew that the Lord had forgiven him the guilt, and that his heart belonged undivided to Jesus. But I suppose the memory of what he did earlier remained in him and helped to do all the more to the proclamation of the Lord. Just as blind zeal drove him to be at the service of injustice, so it is now his "seeing zeal" to be at the service of righteousness and tirelessly proclaim the kingdom of God.

The wisdom of God, after the true conversion of man to God took place, can subsequently even create a burning fire of love, which drives us to respond

completely to God's love and to make good things as far as possible, catching up things of the past and do everything to participate with the grace of God.

This, is a great consolation message. There is an opportunity to seriously repent, to turn completely to God and not to be oppressed by his weakness or failure and sins, but to be lifted up by God. It is rather a work of the devil or one's own soul if we leave ourselves on the way of resignation! We need only remember the Lord as a loving Father who is always ready to lift up his child.

It can then lead to another step. It is not just a question of catching up with the missed, but of collecting oil in the lamps in order to always have enough. The path of following Christ involves not only the rejection of evil when it approaches us in the form of the devil, the world and one's own flesh, no, we can also go forward. Every day gives us the opportunity to collect treasures for heaven. How much have those saints gathered who have done more than is required to stay on the straight path!

It's not that hard!

It is a question of love and responsibility, because we are not only focused on our own lives. Daily little acts of love and self-overcoming make the flame of love burn in us and it grows larger. Acts of trust in God leave God more space in our lives and all the more we will listen to Him and be guided. The spiritual life becomes easier and is growing in love.

Finally, the present state of the Church is a cause for serious concern. Perhaps we can intensify our prayers and the efforts to go the way of holiness and offer to the Lord and ask him to resolve the present confusion as soon as possible!