

8. December 2019

“True Unity”

Rom 15, 4-9

And all these things which were written so long ago were written so that we, learning perseverance and the encouragement which the scriptures give, should have hope. Now the God of perseverance and encouragement give you all the same purpose, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that you may together give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one heart. Accept one another, then, for the sake of God's glory, as Christ accepted you. I tell you that Christ's work was to serve the circumcised, fulfilling the truthfulness of God by carrying out the promises made to the fathers, and his work was also for the gentiles, so that they should give glory to God for his faithful love; as scripture says: For this I shall praise you among the nations and sing praise to your name.

The daily reading should be part of our spiritual life. It is also called the "lectio divina" and it is thankful to note that more and more Catholics are discovering this source of truth and life. Whoever does this will find that after a time the soul becomes hungry for the Word of God and gains inner comfort and instruction. The deeper the word of God penetrates into us, the more it will also give us direction and orientation and prevent us from listening to false voices. Since it is the Word of God, it also has the power to transform us, to be the guide for our actions. From our Lady we know that she *"treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart"* (Lk 2,19). This path will create the biggest fruit. It is not just a reflection with the mind, but the word should enter the heart and spread its light to enlighten us. In this way, we will never lose hope, for there will always be a word of the Lord to which the Holy Spirit reminds us, however hopeless and difficult the situation may be.

People who for example are suffering very much from the present situation of the church, which is understandable and appropriate, should not sink into hopelessness, but remember the word that the gates of hell will not overwhelm the church! (cf. Mt 16,18). People who are tired and burdened should remember the word that Jesus invited them to come to Him (cf. Mt 11,28)...

There is so much consolation and strengthening through the Holy Scriptures together with true instruction and wisdom, so that the daily reading should become the food that strengthens us in every way.

The apostle continues speaking in the text of a great unanimity corresponding to the Lord Jesus Christ. We should listen carefully here. It is not just a common general unity often sought by humans. In our church, too, we speak of unity and rightly admonish it. But it must be a true unity, one that agrees with the truth.

If we, for example, look for unity with Protestants, what can it be? With believing Protestants we have the common belief in Christ the Lord, according to the word: *“one Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph 4,5). There are common convictions and therefore common moral values. But there are also differences in the whole faith. Therefore, unity with a devout Catholic is in principle deeper because here the complete faith is embraced.

With a Protestant usually we cannot exchange about the love of the Mother of the Lord or about friendship with the saints and much more! The believing Protestant thus lacks the full unity with the whole faith and therefore the ultimate unity with us. But we can already agree with him in essential points and maintain the existing unity.

But since love is ordered to the whole of unity, it must be our endeavour to help those who are still separated from us to find the whole true faith and thus to realise great unity.

What has been said about unity with Protestants can now be applied to many situations. True and whole unity needs truth as a basis. Otherwise it can only arise partially. That is why the true and whole unity is only to be found in Christ, and the Catholic Church is the sign of unity among men.

Therefore, it is important to warn against false unity aspirations that exclude the truth from us as ideals. The unity of religions for example with their remaining errors, cannot be considered as an ideal goal. There cannot be a larger religious unity over the Catholic Church which corresponds to Christ and praises the Father with one heart.

It is not, therefore, a questionable form of proselytism when the Gospel is testified to the Jews: *“I tell you that Christ's work was to serve the circumcised, fulfilling the truthfulness of God by carrying out the promises made to the fathers.”* The innermost desire that the Jews should recognize their Messiah after such a long time, and that the promises of the Fathers be confirmed, thus results in the love of God and his longing to lead his "firstborn" home to full unity with him.

Likewise, the Gentiles praise God for the sake of his mercy; it is written, therefore:
“For this I shall praise you among the nations and sing praise to your name.”

If mankind wants to come to sing praise and worship unanimously and peacefully, then they must awaken to the fullness of the true faith in Jesus Christ, which the Lord offers to every man, be they Jews or Gentiles.

That's why we pray every day in the office here in Jerusalem:

For all who seek God that they are found by his love, Kyrie eleison.

For all who call the name of the Lord in truth, that they find unity in you! Kyrie eleison.