

13. December 2019

“The ways of the Lord and a burning heart”

Isa 48,17-19

Thus says Yahweh, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Yahweh your God and teach you for your own good, I lead you in the way you ought to go. If only you had listened to my commandments! Your prosperity would have been like a river and your saving justice like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been numbered like the sand, your offspring as many as its grains. Their name would never be cancelled or blotted out from my presence.

People often seek explanations for why there are so many problems on earth, why so much misfortune can happen in their personal lives too! Unfortunately, the question is all too rarely asked whether the paths they take are in line with God's will! It is as if this question no longer exists in today's world or has less and less importance!

A life without God, a life without knowing the deeper reason for existence, or even a life against the commandments of God! What an aberration!

Even if the mercy of God always seeks us humans and his love has done and does everything to reach people, the misery of the man persists, who does not ask for God's ways, who does not learn, what benefits him and does not hear the voice of God the Lord.

Today's reading lamentably complains!

"Would you have paid attention to my commandments?" it says in the text above! Or in Psalm 1,1: *"How blessed is anyone who rejects the advice of the wicked and does not take a stand in the path that sinners tread, nor a seat in company with cynics".*

How is it for our Lord if he sees that people do not accept his grace? Jesus gives an answer! He wept over Jerusalem because the city did not recognize the hour of grace, the hour of his coming and everything he wanted to give her as the Son of God and Messiah (*cf. Lk 19,41-44*)!

What would have happened if this hour had been accepted and taken?

The text of Isaiah gives us a hint:

"Your prosperity would have been like a river and your saving justice like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been numbered like the sand, your offspring as many as its grains."

Perhaps we also know situations in which we meet people who do not realise true life, who do not take the hand of God. Maybe they are very close to us, maybe even in our family. Maybe they are not necessarily wrongdoers who deliberately do evil, but we notice how something in their lives cannot be fulfilled, how they cannot solve certain life situations, how trouble accumulates!

That hurts: Once for the Lord, when we see him struggling for the people to show them the right way, and his love finding no answer, and for the man himself, who cuts himself off from the true life and also for us, because we cannot enter into the relationship with him that corresponds to God's realized childhood!

How different could it be! How could grace develop in human life, how could man be free!

If the other person does not leave us indifferent and we really love our neighbour as Christians, then it should be burning within us to do our part so that people can meet Jesus! Perhaps, however, we are not sufficiently aware ourselves which gift we have received with faith and which gift it is to know His commandments and to strive to keep them!

It is always important on our path of discipleship to bring those healing words of the Lord into our hearts, so that they may fill us with gratitude and make that fire burn to care for the salvation of the other person! Let us think of the missionaries who have spared no way to bring the gospel to people!

Of course, we are faced with a Herculean task when we see who else is to be reached by the gospel and who needs to be brought back into contact with the gospel. It may be difficult enough in the closer environment! But that helps us to look at the Holy Spirit.

He is the evangelizer, it is he who knows all the ways of the Lord, and it is he who invites us to work with him!

A Thérèse of the child Jesus once said: *"I want to be love in the heart of the Church."* In her heart burned the longing to be a great missionary. She became it! She even became a patron of the mission and today her relics are carried to different countries around the world. But her life burned in the monastery cell for the mission!

So we too can put a burning desire for the mission in the heart of God and in the heart of the beloved Virgin! And if we do not burn enough for it yet - but already realize how important it is - then we ask the Holy Spirit for a burning heart! And if we are completely indifferent, then let us ask the Holy Spirit to wake us up! He will then show us how we can best serve the Lord and people!