

9. January 2020

“The Lord and the headwind”

Mt 1, 5-8

And at once he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side near Bethsaida, while he himself sent the crowd away. After saying goodbye to them he went off into the hills to pray. When evening came, the boat was far out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. He could see that they were hard pressed in their rowing, for the wind was against them; and about the fourth watch of the night he came towards them, walking on the sea. He was going to pass them by, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they had all seen him and were terrified. But at once he spoke to them and said, 'Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid.' Then he got into the boat with them and the wind dropped. They were utterly and completely dumbfounded, because they had not seen what the miracle of the loaves meant; their minds were closed.

We want to take three terms from today's text and look at them more closely, because it is appropriate to look at this passage of the Gospel allegorically.

On the path of discipleship there can be headwinds, and sometimes the headwind is even a sure sign that one is on the right path. How could it be otherwise, for the light came into darkness and darkness did not take hold of him (cf. *Jn 1,5*), or: "*He was in the world and the world became through him, but the world did not know him. He came into his own, but his own did not receive him.*" (*Jn 1,10-11*)

If the proclamation of the Gospel no longer met resistance, if the Church and its representatives became darlings of the press and the world, if the teaching of the Church was no longer a corrective to the spirit of the world, then something would no longer be right or we would be in a paradise without snakes!

Jesus knows this and has his disciples in view, as the passage testifies to us, and he sees their needs with the headwind. He does come to them, but he does not intervene at first!

Jesus wants trust. He wants the disciples to put into practice in faith all that they have experienced with him. It should live as reality in them, so that they trust in him in all situations - and especially when there is a headwind.

This is a teaching that should reach us too, beyond the disciples. How easily can we panic when there is a headwind, when we are attacked or slandered, when suddenly people turn against us or when developments occur in general that are threatening! It is precisely then that the Lord calls us into trust, when no solution is in sight, when we cannot rely on our own strength, when everything exceeds us! God has not forsaken us then, even if He seems to pass by in the darkness!

Let us think about how often the Lord has saved us, how He came to us again and again and led us out of situations, just as he did with the disciples in today's Gospel. *"... and the wind dropped"*

But there is another point to consider: The lack of faith and trust is a sign of an obdurate attitude! The heart of the disciples has not yet truly received the message of the multiplication of bread. They have not understood what the Lord was telling them and how He invited them to trust completely and from this trust to overcome all further situations!

It is indeed so: If we do not make use of the many situations that the Lord gives us for deepening our faith, then it becomes more and more difficult for our heart to believe and trust, and the next situation for deepening our faith is then not dealt with in the growing faith, which deepens it, but the unfulfilled opportunities accumulate, so to speak, and the heart can become more and more dull.

Therefore it is good to draw the lessons from this described biblical situation and ask the Lord to strengthen our faith and to take concrete steps and acts of trust. This is also done by the will, by saying to the Lord in the next situation that oppresses us: Lord, I want to trust you, I trust in you! He will help us!