

22. April 2020

**“The light came into darkness”**

*Jn 3,16-21*

*For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be judged; but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the Name of God's only Son. And the judgement is this: though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, to prevent his actions from being shown up; but whoever does the truth comes out into the light, so that what he is doing may plainly appear as done in God.'*

The clarity of the apostle John does not allow for grey areas. Even if there are grey areas in the life of man, they should be led into the light of the Lord. And here the decisions are made: Do you want to live in the light or in the darkness, do you accept the light of God or do you remain in the darkness? Do we believe in the Son of God and receive eternal life or not? Of course these clear statements apply to those who have had the opportunity to encounter the Son of God authentically. The encounter with the Lord is the turning point!

The mission of the Son of God into this world is the great saving action for humanity! Not the final judgment on this world is envisaged, but its salvation. This must also be borne in mind in every proclamation, no matter how difficult conditions are encountered, no matter how difficult or hopeless a situation may be: faith must be awakened so that men may be saved.

And still also already the judgement happens. For when we find faith, we already go through the judgment, because we accept forgiveness in Christ. With all our guilt and also with all the transgressions that have happened again and again, we are allowed to come forward to the throne of grace. In this way forgiveness becomes effective again and again, in that through the sacrifice of the Lord our guilt is erased and we are strengthened anew to walk in his light. In this way the Lord also cleanses us from the effects of our guilt, and our life begins to be aligned with eternity. We become "heavenly people", that is to say people who have already been redeemed and are aligned with God.

All this is not received by the one who does not accept faith! He does not live in this special grace, and his guilt and transgressions continue to weigh on him. If he does not accept the faith through his own fault, he closes himself off from the light that should enlighten him!

We hear a serious statement of the apostle about the state of this world in this text: *“Though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil.”*

If we sincerely confront this statement and do not dilute it, we can hardly cultivate a "world optimism", as if the development of this world unfolds, so to speak, the good out of itself, or as if Christ, hidden, would lead the world there. Such thoughts rather come from our own structure of thought, perhaps also linked to an uncritical theory of evolution.

The biblical finding is much more realistic.

Only the true encounter with God opens the way for the light. When the light of God penetrates into the hearts, then we may hope for an improvement in the life situation of people, then also those who are responsible for other people will be enlightened, so that they can make the right decisions for people.

As long as the passions of men still dominate, as long as great selfishness is effective, as long as corruption and the sinful inclinations of the human heart are predominant, so long the deeds of men will remain evil. And this does not change by itself or only by an external impulse.

It needs the encounter with the Lord. This is at least what God offers to men to live in the light of God.

This is why even after 2000 years the ministry of the Church in proclamation does not end. On the contrary: it has probably become even more urgent. Those peoples, especially in Europe, where the Gospel manifested itself early on, need a renewal, because they are in danger of losing their heritage and falling into apostasy.

The Asian continent is largely undeveloped for the faith; the African peoples - although they have accepted the faith and often live it in a refreshing way - need a deepening, so that it may also transform them. The same applies to the American peoples!

May the Lord strengthen the believers so that they may authentically proclaim the Gospel.