

10. July 2020

“The blossoming life”

*Hos 14,2-10*

*Israel, come back to Yahweh your God your guilt was the cause of your downfall. Provide yourself with words and come back to Yahweh. Say to him, 'Take all guilt away and give us what is good, instead of bulls we will dedicate to you our lips. Assyria cannot save us, we will not ride horses any more, or say, "Our God!" to our own handiwork, for you are the one in whom orphans find compassion.' I shall cure them of their disloyalty, I shall love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned away from them. I shall fall like dew on Israel, he will bloom like the lily and thrust out roots like the cedar of Lebanon; he will put out new shoots, he will have the beauty of the olive tree and the fragrance of Lebanon. They will come back to live in my shade; they will grow wheat again, they will make the vine flourish, their wine will be as famous as Lebanon's. What has Ephraim to do with idols any more when I hear him and watch over him? I am like an evergreen cypress, you owe your fruitfulness to me. Let the wise understand these words, let the intelligent grasp their meaning, for Yahweh's ways are straight and the upright will walk in them, but sinners will stumble.*

It is a joy of the heart to recognize the intimate relationship of God that he has with his people Israel, and with what moving words the Lord both calls his people to repentance and shows them what blessings are realized in the lives of the people when they listen to the voice of the Lord!

The path that the people have to follow is clearly marked out and corresponds to the path of true conversion: first of all, it means recognizing one's own guilt!

Many people find this difficult, because they do not seem to be able to bear to admit guilt or fault! Perhaps they still carry a false image of God within them and are afraid of God, as if He were now making them pay for it all their lives and persecuting them because of this guilt!

Perhaps an image they have made of themselves, in which they like to see themselves flawless, will also collapse! Perhaps there is also a deep-seated complex inside of them that denies a true self-knowledge, because one feels so unworthy and cannot bear it!

There are also other forms of blindness which prevent such an elementary step of conversion! In addition, the guilt before God can often be linked to the guilt of men, so that the need to admit guilt and fault before other men can be yet another obstacle! But the most important point is certainly the still existing false image of God!

The text of today, like so many passages of Scripture, clearly shows the image of a loving and merciful God: *"I shall cure them of their disloyalty, I shall love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned away from them."* God reaches out His hand to His children in every conceivable way to lead them to conversion!

Starting from this thought, we could now consider many texts of the Holy Scriptures: From the creation of man in his own image to the Incarnation of the Son of God, his redemptive death, his presence in the Holy Eucharist and countless proofs of divine love in the lives of men. We could always be able to recognize his love for us!

The more we are able to recognize this love of God - and we can ask the Holy Spirit to recognize it better and better - the greater will be the remorse for having acted against God (and man)! A deep repentance means to recognize that we have hurt the love and the truth through our own fault! That is why we can speak of a love remorse! It changes our heart and makes it supple for the will of God! We lose the misery of a proud self-assertion and become more receptive to listen to God and thus recognize Him better.

How this looks like is described in the text: Israel leaves idolatry, it should no longer rely on its own power and instead recognize God as he really is! It is a God who has mercy on the orphaned, who wants to heal the infidelity, and out of sheer magnanimity again shows his love!

With the conversion that has taken place, a new life begins, because the life of grace now unfolds in man! In the wonderful words of the blossoming of this new life from the work of creation, God wants to make man understand that this is the real life of man, that he now has nothing more to do with idols and that he should recognize and walk the clear paths of the Lord!

All these wonderful words of the text should invite us to better understand the love of God and to be able to entrust our lives completely to Him!

For those who have completed the way of conversion, it is necessary to deepen their conversion and, with the help of the gift of the fear of God, to perceive even the smallest deviations from the way of love! The gift of piety helps and supports us to recognize what pleases God and to do it. On this way our life becomes ever brighter and more flourishing in the light of grace, and we are also enabled to fulfil in joy the task entrusted to us by God on this earthly pilgrimage!