

13. July 2020

“God first”

*Mt 10,34-11,1*

*'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set son against father, daughter against mother, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law; a person's enemies will be the members of his own household. 'No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me. No one who prefers son or daughter to me is worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes an upright person because he is upright will have the reward of an upright person. 'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not go without his reward.'* When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.

Again and again we encounter a new dimension of the Lord, some are surprising and at first sight not so easy to understand! Today's text belongs to such a dimension, because we are used to seeing the Lord as the one who brings true peace! This remains true despite the above words of Jesus, because the Lord is the Prince of Peace and brings peace with God, peace among themselves and therefore also inner peace!

But true peace can only be received under the condition of truth, otherwise it is a false peace or only a sham peace that can be broken again at any time!

The words of the Lord are to be understood under this aspect! With him and through the encounter with him the decisive hour comes, whether the person opens himself to the love and truth of God or not! If he does, true peace will be able to enter into him, if he does not, then this quality of peace, which only God can give, cannot enter into him!

Because this fundamental decision is so essential, there can be divisions even in the closest family circles! Take the example of abortion! From a Christian point of

view it can never be justified! For this reason, someone who follows the commandments of God bindingly will not be able to advocate such an act, and with God's help will be able to withstand the pressure that may come from his own family or even from the state. He will not give up the life of the unborn child!

But it is possible that even in the closest of relatives a different view exists, and so enmity can arise around this question!

This situation can now easily be transferred to many other areas, because the one who follows the Lord will not seldom have convictions that are contrary to those who are more influenced by the world and its thinking!

So the enmity of which Jesus speaks is an enmity, against God. The light comes into this world and the world does not seize the light (*cf. Jn 1,5*)! And with Jesus this light comes directly to us, because he is the light of the world, and those who follow him do not walk in darkness (*cf. Jn 8,12*)!

We are always called to follow the truth, even when this is not understood or even rejected by our environment or even by people very close to us! In the worst case, this situation can even affect even the closest relatives and demand serious decisions from us!

But nothing is preferable to God, and therefore nothing can claim or even take the place of God in our lives without creating a great spiritual disorder!

Following Christ appeals to the whole person and wants to lead us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul and strength (*cf. Mt 22,37*)! In the same way, the Lord invites us to carry the cross that lies on our path every day out of love for him! It can be the cross that for his sake, for the sake of truth, we have to leave loved ones and familiar situations in life in order to follow his call. It can be our cross, even to have to experience enmity from people we could never have imagined for the sake of Jesus!

God will help us to carry the cross if we remain faithful to him! We will even grow by it, our love for Jesus will become deeper, and we will be able to receive his love even more!

The most important thing remains to give God the place in our lives that is due to him! This is the first place!