

20. July 2020

“The real answer”

*Mic 6,1-4.6-8*

*Now listen to what Yahweh says: 'Stand up, state your case to the mountains and let the hills hear what you have to say!' Listen, mountains, to the case as Yahweh puts it, give ear, you foundations of the earth, for Yahweh has a case against his people and he will argue it with Israel. My people, what have I done to you, how have I made you tired of me? Answer me! For I brought you up from Egypt, I ransomed you from the place of slave-labour and sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam to lead you. With what shall I enter Yahweh's presence and bow down before God All-high? Shall I enter with burnt offerings, with calves one year old? Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, with ten thousand streams of oil? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrong-doing, the child of my own body for my sin? You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.'*

The way of the Lord for us is clear. The discipleship of the Lord includes the pursuit of the virtues. We are called to focus our efforts on doing the right thing, loving kindness and faithfulness, walking the path with God in reverence. This is what the text presents to us today, in which the Lord enters into a "lawsuit" with His people.

We know this litigation well enough from the testimonies of the Old Covenant. It is the same recurring theme of the faithful and loving God who faces an unfaithful people of Israel. We hear the words that we hear in the Good Friday liturgy: "My people, what have I done to you? Answer me!"

The Lord shows his people what he has done for them and asks what he has done wrong to them? The people should realize what wrong path they have taken and what a violation of God's love they have done.

This is perhaps not clear enough to the people that by breaking the commandments and leaving the path, the love of God is violated. It is not just a matter of failing to fulfill a holy duty that is imposed on people, of securing a life that does not then go astray and can stand before God.

God is not simply the last reality to which we have to give account with our life - which is certainly also the case.

First of all God is a loving Father who is completely devoted to his creatures, whom he has raised to be children of God. If we have a heart that can deeply feel the wounds of love, if we human beings are often very sensitive to the slightest disregard of love, what will it be like for the one who called us into being and created us? Since we are created in the image and likeness of God, we can also draw conclusions about the way God is. It hurts the love of our Father if we turn away from Him ingratitude and neither perceive nor respect His doing for us.

It is important that we recognize this personal level so that our heart can be freed from all harshness. God himself speaks to them: "What have I burdened you with?"

What a question to his people! What a question for us human beings!

If now the realization shines out in man that he has done wrong to God, then he cannot - as in today's text - make amends for it by sacrificing animals. Above all he must return to the right path.

That also applies to us today.

If we sincerely repent that we have violated the love of God, then above all we must resolutely return to the right path. The pain of love for having hurt God can then become an inner fire, the more we must strive for everything that corresponds to the love of God. This does not exclude that we offer him a sacrifice. But the decisive and most important thing is to return to the straight path of following Jesus and thus show the Lord that we recognize his love.

We receive forgiveness through the act of our Lord on the cross, the infinite act of love of God to save us. The answer to this can only be to continue to walk the ways of the Lord in gratitude or to enter them anew.

This is what our Father wants.