

17. August 2020

“The last step”

*Mt 19,16-22*

*And now a man came to him and asked, 'Master, what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is one alone who is good. But if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said, 'Which ones?' Jesus replied, 'These: You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false witness. Honour your father and your mother. You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these. What more do I need to do?' Jesus said, 'If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when the young man heard these words he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.*

This text is certainly familiar to many of us and is also always waiting for an interpretation, for the rich young man who does not take the last step to follow the Lord completely, we certainly encounter in ourselves as well! What does it mean to take the last step? What does it mean for me, in my concrete situation?

Before we do this, we should consider and deepen a word of the Lord. “*There is one alone who is good*”! God alone is good in himself and the source of all good, in God alone is love in its essence, as well as truth, justice and everything that has and is truly valuable! We participate in the good according to our receptivity and can thus grow in the good and do good!

Therefore, if we want to take a final step that goes beyond keeping the commandments, we must lovingly consider whom we are giving ourselves to! The devotion to God, we can accomplish without any restrictions once we have recognized him! With God there are no fluctuations, no darkness, no insecurity, no infidelity, no time limit.

So when Jesus invites us to this total surrender - in today's Gospel it was the young man's great wealth that stopped him from taking the step - he invites us to surrender "to the good", that is, to God! But nothing can make man more fulfill than to serve God completely! Everyone who follows this invitation and for God's sake let other high goods behind him - the Lord will reward him in his own way!

This text can always be understood as an invitation to set out on the path of total dedication and to follow Jesus! This is always a love event, a response to God's love and therefore a wonderful way!

But not only the vocation to a religious community, a spiritual community or to the priesthood asks for total surrender to God!

Therefore the question to all who want to follow Jesus: What is missing for the last step? What is missing, to be able to give oneself up to God's guidance? What do we hold on to, with what do we build our security on, what are we still afraid of? What do we think we will lose when we give ourselves completely to the Lord?

St. Paul, in expectation of the return of Jesus, explains in one of his letters that those who are married, for example, should live as if they were not married:

*“What I mean, brothers, is that the time has become limited, and from now on, those who have spouses should live as though they had none; and those who mourn as though they were not mourning; those who enjoy life as though they did not enjoy it; those who have been buying property as though they had no possessions; and those who are involved with the world as though they were people not engrossed in it. Because this world as we know it is passing away.” (1Cor 7,29-31)*

This should be a good key as to how all devotion to God can be realized in the world, even in normal life! Certainly it does not mean that one neglects one's duties! But the inner orientation towards God can become so dominant that one does everything with regard to Him!

We can, in whatever situation in life, like the rich young man, step before the Lord and ask: What am I missing now? If this question is asked sincerely, then the Lord will answer as he did in the Gospel!

If we ask the Holy Spirit, then we will also understand the answer, and the Holy Spirit, with the Spirit of strength, will give us the strength to take the last step or at least to try again and again!

