

24. September 2020

“God and not the creation at the first place”

Eccl 1,2-11

Sheer futility, Qoheleth says. Sheer futility: everything is futile! What profit can we show for all our toil, toiling under the sun? A generation goes, a generation comes, yet the earth stands firm for ever. The sun rises, the sun sets; then to its place it speeds and there it rises. Southward goes the wind, then turns to the north; it turns and turns again; then back to its circling goes the wind. Into the sea go all the rivers, and yet the sea is never filled, and still to their goal the rivers go. All things are wearisome. No one can say that eyes have not had enough of seeing, ears their fill of hearing. What was, will be again, what has been done, will be done again, and there is nothing new under the sun! Take anything which people acclaim as being new: it existed in the centuries preceding us. No memory remains of the past, and so it will be for the centuries to come - they will not be remembered by their successors.

It is valuable to gain the insight that things are transitory and cannot be enough for man! The course of natural events, which are always repeated, should teach us to look for the imperishable, for what remains!

This text can be seen well in the context of the gift of science, the special gift of the Holy Spirit, which teaches us that creatures are nothing in themselves! They can never be a goal, and they even hinder us on our way with God when we are disorderly connected to them!

The "disorderly love of creatures" is considered by spiritual teachers as a not insignificant danger to spiritual progress. This has to do with the fact that spiritual progress is accompanied by growth in love! But the first love is for God! Our spiritual path consists in learning to love everything in God! If, however, love for creatures takes this place, then we diminish our capacity to love! This is why God lets us experience that creatures are nothing in themselves, but experience their value from God!

In the deeper purification processes, God cleanses us from everything that does not occupy the right place in our lives; it is the task of the Holy Spirit to do this! That is why he comes to the aid of our knowledge and efforts to put God in the first place, precisely through this special gift of science! This is then not only an

intellectual knowledge or a knowledge derived from faith, which is not able to achieve the goal, but the spirit of science lets us see and experience the vanity of things inwardly in a clear way, so that no doubt is possible!

If we now draw the consequence from the truth recognised in God, if we free ourselves from all false attachment to creatures and thus give God more and more the place he is entitled to, then the beauty of creatures can no longer tempt us and compete with God, but creatures will become our bridge to God, because we praise His beauty in them!

At this point it would be good if we could understand that God does not want to take away our earthly pleasures or even the joy of life in the necessary purification processes! How could our Father want this?

No, he wants to free us from entanglements and disorderly ties, so that we may follow the call to a higher love! That is why it makes no sense - even if it is humanly understandable - that we fear the purification processes! It is nonsensical because every disordered love and affection causes suffering, makes it difficult or even completely denies man the deeper dimension of love and freedom! We humans are easily in danger of preferring the lower to the higher! It is then God's love that attracts us to look for the higher and to let us also feel the inadequacy of the ephemeral!

From these considerations the above text of Ecclesiastes opens up and can thus be removed from a possibly pessimistic basic mood. The text leads to the decisive insight: Only God alone can satisfy the hunger of the soul - all other creatures live on him! Only eternity will give the fullness of true joy and thus fulfilment! The path through this time will remain temporary, even if it already becomes the beginning of eternity through the encounter with the Lord! Therefore it is wise not to give creatures and the temporal sequences of our lives the attention and love that belongs to God alone!