

9. October 2020

“Children of Abraham”

Gal 3:7-14

Be sure, then, that it is people of faith who are the children of Abraham. And it was because scripture foresaw that God would give saving justice to the gentiles through faith, that it announced the future gospel to Abraham in the words: All nations will be blessed in you. So it is people of faith who receive the same blessing as Abraham, the man of faith. On the other hand, all those who depend on the works of the Law are under a curse, since scripture says: Accursed be he who does not make what is written in the book of the Law effective, by putting it into practice. Now it is obvious that nobody is reckoned as upright in God's sight by the Law, since the upright will live through faith; and the Law is based not on faith but on the principle, whoever complies with it will find life in it. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by being cursed for our sake since scripture says: Anyone hanged is accursed, so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the gentiles in Christ Jesus, and so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

In faith we are connected with all those before us who are under the blessing of Abraham! This is what the apostle conveys to us, and we get to know God's foresighted action a little better! “In Abraham you have blessed all nations” is how I pray every morning at the beginning of the day in a hymn to the Blessed Trinity, and it becomes so much clearer that we Christians who came to faith from the Gentiles were already bound by God into the history of salvation!

How comforting it is to know that God has been thinking of us for a long time, that we are and have always been included in his all-embracing love! Therefore we are not people without a history, who only now have to invent and recognize everything anew! No, the Lord has been walking with us for a long time; everything has been prepared and decided in his love!

Our kind apostle is very keen that we should better understand the loving action of God and that we should feel at home with God and his history! This is also important for our life in the church! In particular, it is the history of believers after the coming of the Lord to this earth, and the Apostle wants to see it inserted into the history of God and his people!

We should therefore also better grasp our Catholic tradition, which connects us with the faith of the Fathers! It is not something you can simply discard without suffering great harm! It is certainly true that the Spirit draws new and old from the bosom of the Church (*cf. Mt 13:52*) and that the Church should always reform herself, for she must not become a museum of piety! But she cannot weaken her identity by rejecting her own traditions and instead adopting impulses and practices from other denominations, religions or the world, perhaps without examining them!

I am always sorry when I see that the traditional Holy Mass still evokes a sense of strangeness in some people, as if it were a relic from a time long past! But the truth is that it has been celebrated in this way or very similarly for centuries, and most of the saints we venerate have been spiritually at home in this liturgy! It is the liturgy in particular that gives us a sense of being bound up in God's action and love for a long time and thus gives us a home in God!

One of the striking weaknesses we are experiencing in the current phase of church history is the more intensive penetration of modernity! It has very little understanding of what has grown and been handed down, the sense of sacred tradition! It has little sense of eternal truths, and this influence makes life superficial and also easily arbitrary! When this current spreads in the church, then the church loses its sense of God's way with her and easily adapts to the current of the times, which is what we are currently suffering. The church no longer breathes the past centuries, which are also brought to mind in the liturgy by Gregorian chant, but short-term innovations take their place!

These, however, do not give us a home, but connect us more with the spirit of the times and its attitude to life.

It is especially important for young people to be able to encounter a living tradition and not to find in the Church what they see in the world anyway! It is noticeable, by the way, that it is not unusual for young people to seek the traditional liturgy, which is not a kind of nostalgia, but possibly the inner desire to anchor themselves more in what is enduring in the constant flow of this time, and thus in the depths of God himself.

