

26. October 2020

## “Children of light”

*Eph 4:32-5:8*

*Be generous to one another, sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ. As God's dear children, then, take him as your pattern, and follow Christ by loving as he loved you, giving himself up for us as an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God. Among you there must be not even a mention of sexual vice or impurity in any of its forms, or greed: this would scarcely become the holy people of God! There must be no foul or salacious talk or coarse jokes - all this is wrong for you; there should rather be thanksgiving. For you can be quite certain that nobody who indulges in sexual immorality or impurity or greed - which is worshipping a false god - can inherit the kingdom of God. Do not let anyone deceive you with empty arguments: it is such behaviour that draws down God's retribution on those who rebel against him. Make sure that you do not throw in your lot with them. You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; behave as children of light.*

We humans are indeed called to be “like God”. Jesus even says that we should be perfect like the Father in heaven (*Mt 5:48*). Now this “to be like God” is not to be understood in the way the seduction in paradise happened (*cf. Gen 3:5*), but as an invitation to live and act in his spirit.

In the sense of discernment of spirits we should notice carefully that the devil uses words here which, understood in the right sense, correspond to the truth, but with them he has a different intention. Bishop Schneider once put it this way: The temptation was “to be like God without God” but it is right “to be like God with God”.

The text shows us what this wanting to be like God looks like, namely that we imitate the Lord in his mercy, in his readiness to forgive, in his love. This is brought about in us by His Spirit, if we listen to Him and let ourselves be led by Him. In this way we will indeed become like the Lord, for our thoughts and actions are then no longer determined by our fallen nature with its manifold seductiveness, but by the Spirit of the Lord. This is the true transformation that takes place within us, the unfolding of the image of God within us. Everyone should realise that this is a longer way, which will only be completed in eternity. Even if we receive all

the graces from God, these must first be internalised by us so that they can have a lasting effect in us and we can live as “children of light” - what a beautiful term - and become light ourselves through the Lord.

Paul does not describe this glory to us without realistically drawing our attention to the dangers that threaten our vocation as “children of light”.

First of all he mentions fornication, shamelessness and greed. We can see that these words reach into the present day and are not outdated and no longer fit into our “modern and enlightened world”. Man remains the same with his possibilities and aberrations.

Thankfully, the Teacher of Peoples points out that these things should not even be spoken of! How do you think he would react if he were to experience today's media world?

St. Paul will not object if I add that not only should one not speak of these things, but that one should already deal with corresponding thoughts and feelings in the Spirit of God. The sooner we do this, the more the plague of fornication cannot spread any further, and through constant prayer for God's help, may the inner cesspools be cleansed and the influence of the powers of darkness give way. I can highly recommend asking for the help of Our Lady and St. Joan of Arc, who in their purity and kindness are very quickly ready to support us in the struggle for purity.

We must not - according to the Apostle - think that fornication etc. is not all that bad. That is a deception. If we surrender to bad inclinations instead of fighting, then we draw down the “wrath of God” on ourselves. This means that we then no longer live in the grace of God and the devil has almost free way to plague us, to darken us, to increase our dependencies, and we can no longer see God's light properly.

It is striking that Paul is by no means speaking out in favour of inclusivism. He makes a clear distinction: *“Make sure that you do not throw in your lot with them”*, it says clearly. So we cannot live in true community with those who are not ready to submit to God and serve the kingdom of darkness with their lives. We can pray and sacrifice for them, we can always give them a hand to help them find their way out of confusion. But it is illusory to think that we can include them all in a great community because we are all brothers and sisters. They exclude themselves by their lives! Before any participation in the community of the “children of light”

there has to be a sincere conversion. This is what St Paul would probably say, and I believe him!