

7. November 2019

Only the Son Frees You!

Part 1:

„The fear of man“

In the last four reflections, I have focused on the grave situation of an idolatry in the context of the Amazon Synod.

Other aspects of this Synod are important to understand and should be reflected as well. However, I think it would be better to bring up some further detailed reflections in a separate block. This will soon arrive in Spanish and possibly also in English. I will inform the audience if there are certain topics that were mentioned in the meditations and were put down in more detail on the blog.

Today I go over to some aspects of our retreat in the Holy Land. Currently we are accompanying a group of Mexicans in Holy Land retreats. In addition to the reflections on the respective places of grace, there is a spiritual theme, which is reflected in some lectures.

The theme is: *"Only the Son makes you free." (cf. Jn 8,36)*

The reflection of today I put down on the mountain Tabor.

The freedom of man to answer the truth is an act of supreme freedom and honor, and belongs to the dignity of the human person. God has made us capable for the truth. Even though our minds are darkened by original sin, our cognitive possibility has not been so destroyed that we can no longer recognize the truth. *"Who is from the truth, recognizes my voice"* said our Lord Jesus (*Jn 18,37*).

Our answer to the truth, as well as our response to God's love, leads us to a life in true freedom. If God Himself is our goal and we are ever more united with Him, we bind ourselves less and less to this world and we are anchoring ourselves in God. We will reach all our freedom in eternity, when there is nothing between God and us, when our now completely redeemed existence is united with God. Then we have reached our goal and will be able to see and enjoy God forever.

But the way there leads us through this earthly life.

The basic decision happens in the encounter with Jesus. When we listen to him, he leads us out of the imprisonment of sin, that sinister state of life that is a great bondage and enslaving of man. It is the sin that seeks to hold us in separation from God, chains us to the transient life and to ourselves, and overshadows the relationship with other people.

If we as Catholics in conscious faith have taken the first and fundamental step towards freedom, responding to God, avoiding sin, and aligning our hearts with the Lord, there are still a lacking of freedom left which we have to overcome.

The lack of freedom are not sins at first, but they diminish our devotion to God and thus the testimony of a life liberated from the Lord.

Let's first look at the fear of man, a lack of freedom, which is quite common.

It is a great burden to feel unfree in the presence of other people and can have different reasons and effects. In some cases, one may come to the point of having such fear in the presence of other people and, for example, that we are unable to express and represent one's own opinion.

But that does not happen, because real humility may make one's opinion less important, or one deliberately avoid an unnecessary discussion, but one is afraid of the other's reaction.

It may also be easy to feel fundamentally inferior to other people because they are so impressing with their dynamics that we are not free in their presence. Often it can happen that one believes that the person has the qualities one misses for oneself. Here the fear of man easily connects with an inferiority complex. In this context it is also very easy to do an "idealization of other people", which is an artificial unhealthy elevation of the other person.

Such an attitude is not a reflection of a word from the Scriptures that one should respect the other higher than oneself (*cf. Phil 2,3*), but this attitude comes from a kind of self-concentration, a bondage to his own and the other person.

These attitudes also tend to give birth to so-called "substitutes,". This means for example that afterwards one discusses, what one should have said in the situation, when one was influenced by the fear of man, involuntarily remained silent. The result is creating a fantasy and in this structure one behaves as one wished we had done for the concrete situation. The substitutes are then easily far too strong because

you now appear as a "hero", while in the specific situation - determined by the fear of man - actually was cowardly. No self-knowledge will arrive and thus the first steps of a way of overcoming.

However, a pronounced attitude of fear of mankind can be dangerous for our faith. We will reflect about this tomorrow and also how we can overcome this kind of fear.