

17. February 2020

“To resist the doubts”

James 1, 1-11

My brothers, consider it a great joy when trials of many kinds come upon you, for you well know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance, and perseverance must complete its work so that you will become fully developed, complete, not deficient in any way. Any of you who lacks wisdom must ask God, who gives to all generously and without scolding; it will be given. But the prayer must be made with faith, and no trace of doubt, because a person who has doubts is like the waves thrown up in the sea by the buffeting of the wind. That sort of person, in two minds, inconsistent in every activity, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord. It is right that the brother in humble circumstances should glory in being lifted up, and the rich in being brought low. For the rich will last no longer than the wild flower; the scorching sun comes up, and the grass withers, its flower falls, its beauty is lost. It is the same with the rich: in the middle of a busy life, the rich will wither.

The central theme of this passage is faith, or rather doubt, which is contrary to faith!

Doubt is, in fact, a profound indecision; a reserve to give oneself completely to God. And this doubt can grow, so that it influences the whole thinking and therefore also our being. If we do not put a stop to doubt, the reality of faith will dissipate as in a fog; and objections and counter positions come to the fore. It becomes more and more difficult to make clear decisions! The hesitant person, that is, the one who doubts, is as if absent; his heart is not really awake and his faith is not for him a powerful reality, that grasps and penetrates him and in which he consciously lives!

This is a very lamentable state of affairs, which impairs the way to God - as described above in the text.

That is why it is important - I speak exclusively of the realm of faith - to confront the doubt immediately. Faith holds on to God and does not let the emotional sphere or the thoughts be penetrated by the (gnawing) doubt.

Doubts are temptations that the Lord allows in order to strengthen our perseverance on the path of faith, as the text says. If, by opposing doubt, we rely completely on God, then faith will become stronger! When we are attacked by doubts, we can say, for example, "Lord, I believe you, because you said so." With this, we shift the emphasis to the dimension of our will, even without lofty religious feelings and without feeling the presence of God within us. But precisely in such an act of faith, - we could say, an „act of naked faith“ - against the temptations of doubt, we grow spiritually, because then we are not like *"the waves thrown up in the sea by the buffeting of the wind"*.

It is important to resist doubt immediately, especially if it attacks issues of faith, such as the certainty that God loves us, that He is merciful to us, etc. It doesn't make sense for us to start arguing with the doubt, trying to gather arguments against it. It is better to turn away and turn to God!

It is similar to what we must do in the face of the devil's temptations. With him we should not engage in a discussion; we should either flee from him or drive him away. Let us remember what happened to the woman in Paradise, who should have cut off the dialogue with the serpent, instead of letting herself be influenced by her (*cf. Gen 3*).

Let us ask the Lord for courage and wisdom to resist doubts in a clear way, and let us remember that God takes temptations - however difficult and troublesome they may be - into His service to strengthen His people according to His will and to lead them to perseverance in good, for:

"Perseverance must complete its work so that you will become fully developed, complete, not deficient in any way."