

11. May 2020

“To remain in Gods word”

Jn 14,21-26

Whoever holds to my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and reveal myself to him.' Judas -- not Judas Iscariot -- said to him, 'Lord, what has happened, that you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?' Jesus replied: Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him. Anyone who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not my own: it is the word of the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.

As Jesus clearly shows us today, love for him consists very much in keeping his commandments, in remaining in his word. This may sound a little surprising at first, because we usually associate love strongly with feelings. However, without excluding the emotional realm, which makes love warm and naturally belongs to the realm of love, today's text more strongly addresses the will of man.

The will is that freedom of man, that power of love, which is given to us to decide for the right thing and then to do the right thing! The commandments of God and the word of the Lord are the right thing par excellence. Nothing is more important than to try to live completely in his commandments, to remain in his word. Eternal life is promised to the keeping of his commandments.

All this is easy for us as believers to understand. The difficulty, however, is to uphold this fundamental decision to keep the commandments of God and to remain in the Word of the Lord, against all the various temptations that challenge our way. After all, it is not only the commandments in a certain "general sense", but the Word of the Lord also addresses the finer attitudes that belong to the realm of the commandments. If we take as an example the commandment that marriage must not be broken, Jesus clearly tells us that we are already breaking marriage in our hearts when we look at a woman covetously (*Matt 5,28*). In addition, there are the traditional teachings of the Church concerning the whole area of sexuality.

It is not difficult to notice that the environment in which we usually live often no longer respects these commandments of God. Even in the Church there are currents - and this is particularly tragic - which no longer maintain the area of the sixth commandment in its entire dimension. Let us remember, for example, that unfortunately it is not uncommon that in some countries chastity before marriage is hardly ever mentioned by the Church, etc.

Therefore, our will must be completely united to God and we must ask from him the strength to remain faithful to what we have recognized as the truth and what we have been taught by the Church's unchanged teaching. This means remaining in the Word of the Lord; then God will be able to dwell in us. Even though God always seeks the sinner in his love, God cannot live in man if he moves outside of his commandments.

It needs great attention to remain in the Word of the Lord. For this reason, it is important never to neglect the spiritual life, to take the Word of the Lord deeply and to recall it in prayer and to receive the gift of the sacraments.

In his great goodness, God gives us the Holy Spirit: *“But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.”*

It is the Spirit of the Lord who reminds to do what the Lord wants us to do. Not only does he remind us, but he also gives us the strength to remain in the Word of the Lord beyond our own efforts.

Therefore, if we remain in living contact with the Spirit of the Lord, He will strengthen us in the concrete situations in which we are in danger that the Word of the Lord is fading into the background, and temptations, distractions, etc. becoming dominant.

We must not overlook the fact that temptations do not always "overwhelm" us directly. They can also prepare themselves slowly, for example by neglecting our religious duties, becoming more worldly, spending too much time on unimportant and trivial things, not working on our imperfections and venial sins, etc. All this weakens our attention to God, and we can then fall more easily into temptation.

So it is the Holy Spirit who wants to remind us of everything that the Lord has said, and so also of everything that has been advised to us in order to maintain our innermost connection with God. The Holy Spirit is our helper, who speaks to us, he

is the friend of our soul, who supports us so that we may live and remain in grace and so that God may live in us.

Let us speak to him, and even more: let us try to listen to him well. There is no better friend and advisor!