

6. July 2020

**“God's love is searching for us!”**

*Hos 2,16.17-18.21-22*

*But look, I am going to seduce her and lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. There I shall give her back her vineyards, and make the Vale of Achor a gateway of hope. There she will respond as when she was young, as on the day when she came up from Egypt. When that day comes- declares Yahweh- you will call me, 'My husband', no more will you call me, 'My Baal'. I shall betroth you to myself for ever, I shall betroth you in uprightness and justice, and faithful love and tenderness. Yes, I shall betroth you to myself in loyalty and in the knowledge of Yahweh.*

Before short time we heard how God's love for his people was expressed by the prophet Amos! In the promises it became clear what the real intention of God is with his people! Today we hear another aspect of this love, which shows itself rather as marital love: God courts his people as a man courts a beloved bride! This tender love of God for his people can already be experienced in the Old Covenant and becomes even clearer with the coming of Jesus!

To put it in human terms, but still true: God does not give up to call his people! All the setbacks caused by the infidelity of his people do not cause God to give up on us! This is the reality that gives us hope, that always surrounds us and is always ready to communicate with us!

The promise made today is that the people, in order to remain in the existing terms, will be legally entrusted to God and will no longer remain in an adulterous relationship with the Baal! This image is very eloquent, and as Catholics we can well understand it in our human domain! If a validly shot marriage exists, then other relationships that include the special acts of marriage are illegal and therefore a breach of the marriage covenant!

This also applies to the Church! She is entrusted to the Lord! If she neglects her missionary task and associates herself with the spirit of the world, she commits a kind of spiritual adultery!

God, on the other hand, wants to make a covenant with Israel, in which all creatures are also included, and he assures his people of wonderful gifts: the end of

the war, peace and security! God's promise is valid for ever because he will never leave men, neither in time nor in eternity! Especially beautiful is the statement about the bride price that God instills in the legitimate marriage with His people: God's justice and the establishment of justice, love and mercy!

What applies to the people also happens in the human soul: when the soul turns away from sin and returns to God, she enters into the creature's legitimate relationship with the Creator! As long as the soul remains in sin, that is, in the realm of darkness, she lives in an illegitimate relationship with the Baal! She commits adultery! But if conversion takes place and the soul calls upon God as her Creator and Redeemer, then the grace of God can enter into the soul and God brings with him all the gifts of which the text speaks! The inner war ends, peace and security move into the soul! God now adorns the soul with His justice and covers her with love and mercy! The eternal covenant becomes effective, God confesses his bride!

In so many different ways God expresses his love for his people, that is, for us human beings, and wants to make us understand at all times that this love never rests and waits for our response! As soon as this takes place, God's advertising love becomes a celebration of love for the people! God's will of salvation can be realized and we call God by his right name and recognize more and more his affection for us!