

10. August 2020

“To disregard life”

Jn 12,24-26 (Reading for the Feast of St. Lawrence)

In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me, must follow me, and my servant will be with me wherever I am. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.

The word of the Lord that we should guard our lives seems at first to contradict the great gift of life, which we should respect and protect!

However, this word opens up when we understand that it is not natural life itself that is our goal, but that every human being has a task to fulfil; the goal of life is to attain "Eternal Life" and to be in everlasting communion with God and His own!

We therefore place our life under a higher meaning, and when we have recognized this meaning, our life is ordered according to this higher meaning, or in other words, it is at the service of this higher meaning! Many people have this intuition and therefore look for the meaning of life, because natural life - as they realize - is not enough for man!

This subordination of all our natural desires and ideas with regard to earthly goals to the great goal of living on this earth already as well as possible in harmony with God's will, makes us "disregard" natural life with regard to the great goal and we can "lose" it in this respect!

This word is even well understandable in our earthly reality! Take an athlete who wants to win a gold medal: he subordinates everything to this goal because he wants to achieve the glory of such a victory! He denies himself some joys of life, so he pays little attention to them!

Some time ago I read a shocking report by a former priest in the USA! He described the conditions in a seminary where he had the formation! There, the enjoyment of beach parties, nightly parties, intense alcohol consumption, dancing, dubious films and many other "joys of life" - often together with the main persons responsible or even initiated by them - were the order of the day! It is not

surprising that moral transgressions thrive in such an environment! Unfortunately, these reports have now been confirmed!

Priests who are called to a particular form of following Christ must all, in a special way, leave the "natural life" and do everything that serves their vocation! Everything must be subordinated to this goal, so that they may fulfil their God-given vocation. Thus, the worldly life must be given little respect in order to win the spiritual life!

One cannot, therefore, follow Christ and still think that one can do all those things in the world that bring joy or promise it! Even the harmless and therefore permitted joys need to be handled wisely so that they do not hinder us on the path of discipleship, take up too much of our time and hinder the development of our supernatural life!

This does not mean that the word has been spoken to a sinister asceticism that rejects all natural things as such, but it is about the attention to a spiritual way of life that corresponds to the call of God!

The following of the Lord, to which he invites us, teaches us the essential things and wants to lead us completely to our destiny as human beings! It is a call to the service of Christ who gave his life for us! Jesus himself is the grain of wheat mentioned in the text, which fell into the earth and died!

Jesus came to serve us! When we serve Him, we serve the people in Him! Here is an important differentiation to be noticed! Service to man always has a value! But this value becomes even higher when it is done in the Spirit of the Lord and we learn to perceive man in the love of Christ and thus to recognize what really serves him, beyond the current needs!

The promises the Lord gives us are very strengthening, because when we serve Him, the Father will honour us! This should be enough of a reward for us!