

16. September 2020

“The royal path”

*1 Cor 12,31-13,13*

*Though I command languages both human and angelic - if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains - if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned - if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with. For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways. Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known. As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love.*

It is love that makes everything truly shine! It is it that gives glow to everything and leads everything into the lasting order, because it is out of love that we are created, redeemed out of love and are completed out of love!

Love is so essential that without it nothing can prosper, nothing can really grow, not even good gifts from God can unfold their true beauty and goodness! We can say that it is love that gives real life to everything and gives the delicious taste! In short: love animates everything, the lack of love empties everything of its deeper meaning!

A deep spiritual joy arises when man increasingly lives in the truth, because then he is formed by the Spirit of God into what he actually is and should become! The innermost motivation for this inner transformation process is the divine love,

which does not rest until man corresponds more and more to the image of Christ, until the divine splendour becomes visible through the life of man and God's love is revealed through his children!

Thus it becomes understandable that Paul, in view of the paramount importance of love, puts everything in relation to it! If love is not the final motive for our actions, then even the wonderful gifts of God - as mentioned above - are robbed of their deeper meaning and we become “*gong booming or a cymbal clashing*”.

“*Love never comes to an end*”, the apostle tells us, while everything else fades away and is piecemeal! So we can say with the apostle that through love everything we do has eternal value! “*In the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone*” St. John of the Cross said, and we know enough examples from the New Testament to make it clear that the Last Judgment will ask us about the love we practise!

So if love is the last value measure of all action, then love is the royal road of our life! We can measure and test everything by it! This also becomes understandable when we remember that everything God does is done out of love, because there is no other motive for God and this includes justice!

Thus the words of St. Paul remind us of the fundamental decision of our way of following Christ: Love is the yardstick and we have to check everything we say and do against this yardstick! Are we acting out of love? Are our words imbued with love? Is our being a message of love for people?

In order to examine our way, we must always keep this yardstick in mind and also better understand what love means, we must enter the school of love! In relation to our neighbour, for example, love does not only focus on his bodily welfare, but especially on his eternal salvation! It sees the true need of man who does not live on bread alone, but above all should come into contact with the love of God (*cf. Mt 4,4*)!

Let us simply take from this reflection that we learn to do everything out of love for God and for people! As we deepen this path, love grows, it becomes more natural and penetrates us more and more, we release ourselves from self-constraint, forms of egocentrism can be overcome, love then shapes our inner being more and more and teaches us its ways!

The love of God is poured out into our hearts, that is the Holy Spirit who dwells in us (*cf. Rom 5,5*)! Let us ask Him to carry out this inner transformation and listen to Him well! It is his joy to see us grow in love, because then we will come closer and closer to our goal: to glorify God and serve mankind and thus become witnesses of his love, so that people may be able to recognise their loving Father!