



8. August 2019 „The turmoil in Kadesh“

Num 20,1-13

The Israelites, the whole community, arrived in the first month at the desert of Zin. The people settled at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. There was no water for the community, so they banded together against Moses and Aaron. The people laid the blame on Moses. 'We would rather have died', they said, 'as our brothers died before Yahweh! Why have you brought Yahweh's community into this desert, for us and our livestock to die here? Why did you lead us out of Egypt, only to bring us to this wretched place? It is a place unfit for sowing, it has no figs, no vines, no pomegranates, and there is not even water to drink!' Leaving the assembly, Moses and Aaron went to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. They threw themselves on their faces, and the glory of Yahweh appeared to them. Yahweh then spoke to Moses and said. 'Take the branch and call the community together, you and your brother Aaron. Then, in full view of them, order this rock to release its water. You will release water from the rock for them and provide drink for the community and their livestock.' Moses took up the branch from before Yahweh, as he had directed him. Moses and Aaron then called the assembly together in front of the rock. He then said to them, 'Listen now, you rebels. Shall we make water gush from this rock for you?' Moses then raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the branch; water gushed out in abundance, and the community and their livestock drank. Yahweh then said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe that I could assert my holiness before the Israelites' eyes, you will not lead this assembly into the country which I am giving them.' These were the Waters of Meribah, where the Israelites laid the blame on Yahweh and where, by their means, he asserted his holiness.

After the meditations for the Feast of the "Father of Mankind", we return to the daily readings.

Today we hear of a turmoil of the people of Israel against the Lord. The Sacred Scripture does not hide from us the frequent conflicts of the elected people with their God.

All too often we notice that the people are not satisfied with the guidance of God, because they have imagined something different or a need that makes them unquiet and then unjust.

Let us remember the beginning: it was the people who suffered from the unbearable oppression of the Egyptians and cried out to the Lord. It was God who answered them. With a strong hand, the Lord has freed them and led them through the desert. There the Lord provided them again and again in a wonderful way. In this way, the Israelites could often experience God concretely through His intervention and guidance, so that there was no reason to quarrel with Moses and Aaron when difficulties arrived.

But here we have a look into people's hearts and will often discover the lack of faith and trust.

It is not without purpose that in the last few days in the meditations we have heard the strong request from God the Father to trust him. This trust is not only valid when everything happens as we hope. No, trust is built upon God Himself and His goodness, who knows how to direct everything for good, even those circumstances that we do not overlook or that cause us suffering.

The Israelites in Kadesh did not react like this. They were terrified of not having water. Instead of taking a step of trust and realizing what the Lord has done for them all the time, they began to blame their leaders.

It is obvious that they were already dissatisfied before, because in the desert they missed grain, figs of wine and pomegranates, that is, the fullness of natural life. So they started to question everything and to rebel: Why have you brought Yahweh's community into this desert, for us and our livestock to die here? Why did you lead us out of Egypt, only to bring us to this wretched place?

This, too, is a process that we should perceive in our hearts, for after the conversion to our Lord, it is above all a matter of transforming our hearts and clearing out everything that is foreign to God; we should learn to love the Lord with all our hearts.

So we can ask: where are sources of dissatisfaction within us? Does envy still work in us? Where are we not satisfied with what God has prepared for us and are disappointed in our expectations? Where have we become so accustomed to the comfort and fullness of life, so that loss or limitations create dissatisfied feelings?

Sacred Scripture not only tells us the history of God with us, but it is also given to us for teaching. Therefore, it is very fruitful to be deeply touched by the Word of God and to draw our conclusions from it.

Every dissatisfaction and lack of trust that we feel in us closes the free flow of love between the heart of God and our hearts.

We need not be particularly frightened when we still perceive such strange things in our hearts. They are there and we should not overlook them. But then we are called to carry them to the heart of God so that He can transform them.

The small things can become great, carelessness on our spiritual way of life leads to recklessness. Recklessness no longer allows us to see the situations in the light of the Lord and to give the appropriate answers.

So it can happen to us - without us realizing it correctly - that we are suddenly in a tension with God. This does not have to be like an open rebellion, but can lead to a closedness, we deprive God of our trust or no longer give it to him according to the truth. We remain in a position of accusation, dissatisfaction, etc.

The turmoil in Kadesh, which God answered with a miracle, can teach us to pay close attention to our inner emotions and to avoid with the spirit of the fear of God all that could displease our beloved Heavenly Father.