

14. August 2019
„The reproof of the brother“

Mat. 18:15-20

If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain the charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax collector. In truth I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. In truth I tell you once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.'

We receive a clear instruction through the text of the Lord, how we have to deal with a sinful brother. It is not a question of minor irregularities and failures that we communicate to the brother in order to help him according to certain behaviors that might weaken the unit, for example.

No, it's about sins that, if not abandoned, endanger the soul's salvation, so it is a serious matter.

If we hear this directive, then we can ask ourselves if it is even followed today. Do we make it happen that sins happen before our eyes and we remain silent?

A short time ago, a woman trusted me a burden she carries. She said she observed that people were receiving the holy communion and were obviously not in the state of grace. At the same time, she let me understand that, from her point of view, fewer and fewer priests are still accepting the true doctrine of the right reception of holy communion.

In fact, a real confusion has arisen in the church at this point in different parts of the world.

The rules in former times were clear that communion can only be received in the state of grace. Today an attitude is increasingly inclined that the faithful's personal decision of conscience should be the orientation and no longer the authority of the teaching.

So it can happen that what once was previously regarded as a sin and treated accordingly, it is no longer regarded as a sin.

Thus, in the following, what we hear from the Lord will more and more rarely happen: the correction of the sinful brother on the way as described by the apostle: first in private, then under witnesses and finally before the community of the faithful. If the sinner does not listen and does not leave the wrong ways you look to him in distance.

However, if it is no longer clear what sin is and what is not the unity of the faithful about these questions is broken and this clearing path of the Lord is hardly practicable. The final consequence, namely keeping a distance from the sinful brother, would today be interpreted as a lack of mercy. With this we would have arrived at a dead end.

So how today deal with a situation described by the Lord?

It is certain that neither the Scriptures nor the true teaching of the Church changes. So, in the spirit of this world, which is increasingly entering the Church, when the believers are influenced and the Church's authority does not resist, we have to make a clear decision. This can only mean: I follow the teaching of the Holy Scripture and remain faithful to the Church and act accordingly.

We are responsible before God and any spreading errors and moral laxism should not affect us so much that we fear to say the truth.

One certainly has to do this wisely and with the right assessment of the situation. It implies that, in fact, there is no longer any general consensus on certain issues, which in itself is very painful. But that must not corrupt us. We can ask the Holy Spirit for advice how to deal with situations such as those the Lord describes. We will then find the way to help our erring brother to leave his wrong ways. If he listens to us, we have recovered him.

If he does not listen immediately, then the Holy Spirit will show us the next step. So we will be able to follow the advice of the Lord and be able to implement it even in a time of increasing confusion.