

13. September 2019
„To turn from a blasphemer to a Confessor“

1 Tim 1-2.12-14

Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus appointed by the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, true child of mine in the faith. Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength. By calling me into his service he has judged me trustworthy, even though I used to be a blasphemer and a persecutor and contemptuous. Mercy, however, was shown me, because while I lacked faith I acted in ignorance; but the grace of our Lord filled me with faith and with the love that is in Christ Jesus.

The grace of the Lord, who called the Apostle Paul to follow the Lord, is a great comfort. According to the apostle's own words, he was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a wicked man until he found the grace of God and Paul did answer to the call of God.

How many people there are today who still live in unbelief and are incomprehensible, indifferent or even hostile to the faith. Maybe there are also blasphemers among them. They blaspheme because they are ignorant.

Without a doubt, blasphemy is a very bad thing. One has mostly to avoid such people, because they often insult the Lord unknowingly or anything that has anything to do with the Lord and that is unbearable. But the example of the apostle also gives us hope. Maybe not all the blasphemers are decidedly wicked, but ignorant.

It is all the more important to proclaim the faith and to pray and sacrifice for the spread of the faith. How are people supposed to know the deeper sources of salvation when the proclamation no longer reaches them, when the conviction of faith fades, and therefore less and less convinced preachers and missionaries testify the beauty of the faith.

Perhaps we believers need a very long breath and therefore a lot of patience, as the Lord Himself has. So in the blasphemer - even if he objectively insults the Lord - we may also discover the ignorant, who may even seek God. So let us not be too frightened. At any rate, Paul was not rejected by the Lord, but enlightened. The Lord

has believed Paul to be faithful and given him his mercy. Paul answered him with all his love and put his whole life into the service of God. He tirelessly proclaimed the Lord and also suffered martyrdom.

Let us take the text as an invitation to pray especially for those who behave like enemies of God and the Church. We do not only know Paul as a great convert. There are many testimonies of people who have been taken by the grace of God and have left wrong ways. The encounter with the great love has reached her heart and overcome it.

Not infrequently, people still have a false image of God and may be aggressive against this false image and not really against God. If they got to know him as he really is, then their heart might melt and everything that has built up against the wrong image would fall off.

So what can we do to help people get to know Christ? Together with our prayer and sacrifice, as well as the authentic proclamation, it is above all the testimony of a redeemed life that convinces. A life that is deeply moved by the love of the Lord, in which the true image of God shines forth. It would be the fruit of a life in the Spirit of God in which we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us inwardly. Perhaps the hope to reach people who do not live a true life may motivate us to let us cleanse ourselves. Perhaps it is also helpful to take a look at certain people who work in public and do a lot of damage and ask God for their conversion.

God has given us through St. Paul so much. His conversion, to which the church has even dedicated its own feast, continues to this day. His enlightened letters have found their way into the Holy Scriptures and are still valid instructions. His zeal invites to imitation. The Lord has done great things for this apostle and wants to do it also today. Not long ago, a Mexican woman, who is worried about the situation of her country and of the Church, said, "Someone must come, like the apostle Paul." Let us ask the Lord for such people like him and try to do our own mission in the light of God!