

28. September 2019

**“The salvation in the cross”**

***Lk 9,43b-45***

***And everyone was awestruck by the greatness of God. But while everyone was full of admiration for all he did, he said to his disciples, For your part, you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.' But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.***

It was difficult for the disciples to understand what it meant to be "*delivered to men.*" Even today it is still part of the great spiritual lesson to understand the motives of God to make this happen, that his Son was delivered to the power of men.

Basically, this is only possible if the light of faith shines, when we begin to understand how great God's love for us human beings is, if we suspect a little - and taught by faith - how God's salvation works for us human beings. This was not yet accessible to the disciples at that time. They had to learn to understand that salvation is not established by a visible triumph of their master, but by his voluntary suffering and death, by the sacrifice of love on the cross.

But the disciples should remember his words when it happened. Therefore, the Lord emphasized that they should remember His words carefully.

Understanding the Cross and thus better understanding God's actions in this, as well as sticking to His Word, are two essential elements for our path of following Christ.

I would remind you of the meditations about St. Jeanne d'Arc, who had the task of liberating France from the English and was able to win again the English with military forces. But then she was betrayed and had to complete her mission through her suffering to the point of martyrdom.

This is what happened to many saints, including the Apostles themselves. Their sermon was very successful and many people came to faith. But eleven of the twelve apostles, like their master, suffered a violent death for the sake of faith. In a way, it can be said that their mission was even crowned by the Cross.

This is now related to the depth of the mystery of redemption.

The great wickedness of sin, the destructive power of darkness, the extreme rejection of God, is overcome by the greatest act of love on the Cross of Christ.

But love is never greater, even it is willing to carry the cross. We are never more deeply united with the Lord than if we do not depart from Him in suffering and consciously carry it for the sake of mankind. Faith is never greater than when we hold fast to His Word in the most difficult hours.

From this point of view it is understandable that even some saints asked for the cross and asked for martyrdom. They wanted to show the Lord the greatest love and enter into the mystery of the Cross, and were convinced that in this way they could do the most for the salvation of the souls.

With the view of the participation in the Cross - which of course is always painful and thwarts our natural plans - this is a great act of love and gives us the opportunity to show our love to the Lord, the Cross can be glorified. This also happens when we realize that in a consciously suffering we can participate intensively in the salvation of souls.

From this perspective, we could add another look at the theme of the healing by the Lord that we have just finished:

"The healing of the soul through the conscious acceptance of the cross"

We are usually most afraid of the cross that may come upon us. For this reason, for example one tries everything to eliminate any kind of disease immediately by all possible means. Without questioning that physical healing is of course a great concern and medicine is a gift, it is easy to lose that illness can also carry a message, e.g. a memory of death or that the Lord draws our attention to something, which we do not notice in the normal course of life.

All kinds of crosses that come to us somehow bear the character of death itself, they represent a loss of life, whether on the spiritual, mental or physical level, and our natural reactions are the defense of the cross.

Death is something inevitable, and Scripture reminds us that it is wise to think of our death (*cf. Sir 7,36*). So if we accept with the grace of the Lord the message of death that lies in the Cross, we begin to consciously integrate death into our lives.

As Catholics, we now know by faith that for us death will be eternal union with God in great joy. Our soul knows this, because she longs for this unification. With the graceful acceptance of the Cross, that is, the mostly gradual affirmation of this painful path, we are more oriented towards God, the soul more orientated towards her eternal aim.

In this way, our lives are also increasingly freed from an inner burden, namely the fear of death, which can afflict her intensively. If man now understands that a great missionary power is born in the cross accepted out of love for Jesus, then the temptation of the unfruitfulness of a suffering is going away and the soul is strengthened.

Thus we see that even in the suffering which God has allowed as the consequence of the sin and with the cross which we have to carry he is transforming all to a way of his grace. What wisdom and goodness of our Lord! Our answer can be only to adore him!