

01. February 2020

“The light of faith”

*Mk 4.35-41*

*With the coming of evening that same day, he said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him. Then it began to blow a great gale and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. But he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are lost!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped, and there followed a great calm. Then he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened? Have you still no faith?' They were overcome with awe and said to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'*

Everyone will know such situations in which one is, so to speak, washed away by the waves of life, personal or even super-personal events, and where one feels at the mercy of the situations and circumstances. The disciples, at any rate, were very frightened by the violent gale, and it was probably incomprehensible to them that the Lord could sleep in the boat in such a situation, especially when the boat began to fill with water. But their impression that the Lord would not take care of the resulting distress was wrong! By his word he could calm the storm, and he took the situation to teach them: “*Have you still no faith?*”

That is what the Lord is all about. He wants us to have security in him in all situations. Just as the winds obey him, he is the Lord of all situations in life, even if they seem dark to us and we think the Lord is asleep because he apparently does not hear our prayers and calls!

It is striking that the Lord is very insistent when it comes to faith. Again and again he points out to his disciples that it is faith that sets free the action of God. Faith is, so to speak, the bridge over which God's omnipotence can also unfold concretely! Let us therefore repeatedly ask the Lord to strengthen our faith so that we are deeply rooted in the Lord!

Faith is the light of our life, after we have lost the paradisiacal view of God and only in eternity will we see God as he is! Compared with the beatific vision, which we will have in eternity, faith may be dark: “*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.*” (1 Cor 13,12), as the Apostle to the Gentiles explains to us, and yet it is the light for us, because God offers this way to us and then we can see in faith! How many things we can recognize thanks to faith, while those who do not have faith do not know them!

If we now walk in this light of faith, then the special presence of God can communicate itself in a completely different way and intensity: *“Everything is possible for one who has faith”* (Mk 9,24)! or, to put it like this: the reality of God and his actions becomes so real for us that this reality shapes everything. All areas of human existence are penetrated and overcome in faith; whether it is the storm on the lake, our daily affairs, or the great questions of life. The light falls on the past, present and future! We can dare to say: the heavenly light dispels the darkness of ignorance and remoteness from God, and we walk in this light on a safe path!

Pope Benedict XVI, certainly one of the very wise men of our time, invited again and again to let human reason be enlightened by the supernatural light of faith, so that one can reach a deeper knowledge of God than if one only has a philosophical concept of God!

Certainly, faith is a gift, a supernatural virtue.

But if God invites us to practise this faith generously ; if he exhorts the disciples to believe firmly after all and is surprised at the unbelief of some people (Mt 14,31); if he specifically mentions the faith of the centurion and presents it as exemplary (Lk 7,9); if the woman who is bloodied is praised by the Lord because she dared to approach him in faith (Mt 9,22): then faith is not only God's work, in which man is not involved! We are therefore asked to take steps of faith, to anchor our heart more in God, to "dare" faith, then we will experience that faith actually becomes the normal thing for us. One could almost formulate the opposite: How can one dare to live without faith?

In this biblical scene in the boat the Lord does not pity the disciples. He is neither indifferent to the disciples, nor does he allow himself to be kept by their fear. No, he quiets the storm and calls the disciples to believe. In this faith, they will accomplish with him all the tasks that come upon them. And the same is true for us!