

13. January 2020

“To follow when Jesus calls!”

*Mk 1,14-20*

*After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel.' As he was walking along by the Lake of Galilee he saw Simon and Simon's brother Andrew casting a net in the lake - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Come after me and I will make you into fishers of people'. And at once they left their nets and followed him. Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending the nets. At once he called them and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.*

When Jesus calls, there should be no hesitation! Today's report of the calling of the four disciples leaves no doubt about this. And the word which the Lord has spoken in another place also becomes clear:

*"It is not you who have chosen me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that you should set out and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide (Jn 15,16)".*

The unconditional nature of this call of love and the will of the one who calls does not - from the point of love - allow any lingering. We can probably discover this in most of those who have responded to the call; whether it is the Mother of the Lord, St. Paul, the disciples and many whom we know from the history of the Church. Time is pressing: there is nothing to be preferred to serving the Kingdom of God. For this you can leave everything behind!

Of course, there is the right and even the spiritual duty to examine whether it is a genuine call from God. But if it is recognized as such, then it is necessary to follow Jesus and remain faithful to the call.

The unconditionality of a call from the Lord, however, does not only refer to such a decision which shapes the whole life as that of the disciples and similar qualities of vocation. It is always present, albeit with varying intensity, in all that the Lord asks of us. The call extends to the whole of Christian existence, making it a so-called *kairos*.

Kairos in this context means the temporal moment of grace, the now! Now the Lord's call comes, now is the time to respond, now the Lord speaks to me, now I should follow him.

This attitude pervades the whole gospel. Jesus himself says as he weeps over Jerusalem:

*„If you had known the hour of grace ... „ (cf. Lk 19,41-44).*

Thus the Christian life becomes a wake-up call, because now, in this short time, we can serve the Lord, now people can be saved also through our life and prayer, now we can take care of our eternal future with God.

The great enemy of this "Kairos" attitude in the Christian life is spiritual sleep and the strong involvement in the processes of the world without having the necessary distance to penetrate them in the power of God. When the inner eyes are sleepy, we do not see and hear God's call in the concrete situations of life.

With the words „they have eyes and do not see, ears and do not hear“ (cf. Jer 5,21), the Holy Scriptures laments about those who are not awake for the call of God, who are imprisoned in themselves, who cannot be called out into the service of God, who do not leave their nets or abandon their Father like the apostles, who do not want to leave their accustomed life! In the worst case the hearts are hardened, as the Scriptures testify!

Of course, being awake for the Lord is not a nervous and overzealous attention to everything that surrounds you. It is a spiritual wakefulness that is worked by the Spirit of God Himself. Just as Jesus specifically spoke to the disciples, so the Spirit of God speaks to us, just as the disciples followed the Lord, so we should follow the Spirit's leading.

And a word to the parents.

There is nothing greater for children than to follow a genuine call of God. This call is higher than any family obligations or ideas one has about the future of the children! We do not read in the Gospel that the father Zebedee held back his sons James and John when Jesus called them and they left him behind! A call from God must be obeyed, for it is a great honour and an obligation of love for God and man. Blessed are the children who hear such a call and follow, and blessed are the parents who support them!