

15. May 2020

“Friendship with God”

Jn 15, 12- 17

This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. My command to you is to love one another.

The disciples are called to friendship with the Lord, which goes beyond the relationship between master and disciple. Friendship means to know the heart's desire of the friend and to entrust oneself completely to him. If this already means a wonderful love on the human level, it will be even greater if we can become friends of Jesus.

If on the human level, because of the frailty of the human being, one can also experience disappointments in a friendship relationship, it is different in a friendship with Jesus. From his side it is not subject to fluctuations. The only way to lose his friendship is if we ourselves break it.

Now the friendship with Jesus has some special moments. As we hear, it serves in particular to fulfill a mission that Jesus received from his Father: “*You are my friends, if you do what I command you.*”

Jesus therefore takes his friends with him in his mission and thus in the most important thing for him, namely to do the will of the Father. In Jesus' heart burns the love for the will of the Father, that is his food (*cf. Jn 4,34*). In what is perhaps the most difficult hour of his earthly life in Gethsemane, when the fear of death grips him, he holds fast to the fulfilment of the Father's will: “... *your will be done!*” (*Mt 26,42*).

True friendship with Jesus therefore means entering into his great love for the Father, which he entrusts to his friends and which is linked to the work of redemption.

Here is added a special moment of friendship with Jesus. While we human beings normally make friends with people we meet on the way, the Lord chooses his friends: *“You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last.”*

So the movement starts from Jesus, and when we realize that we are beginning to realize this friendship on our path of following Christ, we respond to his choice. This may give us an even greater certainty in friendship, that it is already prepared for us in God's providence.

Can a friendship go deeper than one that comes from the heart of God? Can an invitation go deeper than that which Jesus wants to take us into God's heart? That is why nothing is preferable to friendship with Jesus!

“This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.”

The friendship with Jesus, as a special expression of love, should also unfold among his disciples - a love founded in the common friendship of Jesus and with Jesus. We are therefore friends of God and this also enables us to shape human relations among ourselves in the love of Christ.

We hear the Lord say that the quality of love he has for us should also be among each other - it is even a commandment, a directive of the Lord.

But how can this be put into practice in concrete terms if we repeatedly reach the limits of our human capacity for love?

At this point we must realize that we need a supernatural love, a love from God. In Jesus' love for us, all aspects of love are fully present, both human and spiritual. That is why we can ask for this love. This quality of love grows towards us from the deepened relationship with the Lord.

Increasing union with God in the way of following Christ then allows such love to mature and makes love of the brother natural. It is renewed again and again from the love of God flowing towards us in his Word and Sacrament, in the action of the Holy Spirit in our inner being, in our concern for our neighbour!

If we live in such a union and try to sincerely realize the Word of the Lord to love one another, then the last sentence of the Lord opens itself: “...so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.”

In such a union with God, we will ask for what is right, and God will be able to give all that he has planned for us!