



**5. June 2020**

**“In trouble you are calm! In the heat moderation”**

**Retreat of Pentecost**

**Part 5**

### **Outer restlessness**

We easily allow ourselves to be absorbed by the dynamics of the works in the world and by their transmission. Also the multitude of encounters and contacts, together with today's almost unlimited communication possibilities, easily create an almost fundamental restlessness around us. Sacred silence is found less and less often, even the churches are becoming more and more places of restlessness instead of valuable places of silence.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to avoid the noisy and distracting circumstances which are not indispensable. Within the outer restlessness that surrounds us, we need an inner anchor point. This means that through internalized prayer we allow an inner space to develop in the soul, where the Holy Spirit lives and gives us his presence and rest. Into this inner space - we could also say monk's cell - we can withdraw even when we are externally restless.

### **Inner restlessness**

But the restlessness is not primarily related to external circumstances. It is often still a kind of "inner drive", which we can perceive with the appropriate attention. We are not yet really at home in God and in ourselves. But we should actually start out from an inner peace, which we find through a close relationship with God, and arrange our outer life in such a way that it - despite all external demands and efforts - gets a calm and steady rhythm.

As a rule, however, we are easily tempted to expose ourselves to external and internal stress. Perhaps we are also too busy fulfilling all kinds of wishes and expectations which are put to us without checking whether they are justified and whether it is useful to fulfil them.

That is why it is helpful to become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit and to carry all noticeable inner restlessness and urges to him in prayer. He can free us from the attachment to the respective situation that causes the restlessness and thus lead us to inner peace. This happens by directing our gaze to God, that is, by looking at the respective concrete situation in which we find ourselves from the

Lord's perspective. If this happens, then the restlessness and the tension usually disappears and the pressing impression of our feelings, which often makes us feel unfree, are disappearing.

The Lord certainly does not want us to follow the external and internal path of following Christ in restlessness and anxiety, but in the confidence and security of his presence. Moreover, everything we do - if we consciously associate it with the Lord - becomes a collaboration in the Kingdom of God. So it should get the "taste" of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is very different from the restlessness of our natural behaviour. Let us also think of the testimony to the outside world. A Christian who leads his life in restlessness and tension is unlikely to be attractive to other people!

This calm which the Holy Spirit wants to give is not only a momentary calming and relaxation of the situation - which it is also - but a growing fundamental inner agreement with the will of God, which gives the soul the peace of God. This peace - together with the inner peace - is updated in each concrete situation, spreads light and clarity and permeates our restlessness.

In this context, it is useful to reflect a little on the disordered passions which often generate the restlessness in us.

### **Excursus: Disordered passions**

This refers to our natural drives, which are aimed at achieving wrong or unimportant contents. So they become disordered, because they are used in a false direction.

But disorder also occurs when the natural drives are not restrained by an appropriate asceticism. They then dominate man and he may do what he does not really want to do (*cf. Rom 7,19*).

Take anger, for example. If this is not tamed and arises because of the non-fulfilment of one's own imagination, then man does not do what is right.

The task of dominating our disorderly passions is very important for progress in the spiritual life. It creates a good foundation for us to become stable and reliable people who are not driven to and fro by the wind. The Holy Spirit gives us a decisive help here!

It is the Holy Spirit who brings order to chaos. This is not only meant cosmically in terms of the creation of the world, but he brings order to the chaos of sin and its effects on our lives. In the heat of conflict, for example, when passions "boil up", the Holy Spirit gives moderation. The corresponding feelings are tamed, the words that come out of them (the inflamed tongue - *cf. Jas 3,5-6*) are calmed, and also detoxified. The heat - the undominated passion - usually exaggerates, injures, loses the objectivity that the Holy Spirit gives us back through his light!

Let us note: The Holy Spirit, when he dwells in our inner being and is also at home there, becomes, through his divine presence, which shows itself especially as love, light and truth, the principle of inner and outer life, which orders towards God. He does this not only by illuminating our minds and giving us the right knowledge, but also by touching our inner disorder. Thus he gives us the power to leave behind restlessness and heat and to overcome them in the grace of God.