

29. June 2020

## "The self-deception" Part 3

On this day, we will conclude the text of self-deception and spiritual blindness that we had been reading for the last few days. Afterwards, it will be necessary to mention some conclusions and recommendations about the causes that favor self-deception and how we can wake up from it. This is what we will focus on in tomorrow's reflection.

Now let us take up Fr. Sladek's text with some personal comments of mine.

*"The already mentioned separation between the 'head' and the 'heart'; the separation between what we consciously think and what we really want and love (even if we have relegated it to the unconscious), is the particular temptation of intellectuals, and therefore also of theologians. According to Aristotle, understanding illustrates reality. The will, for its part, should be governed by what has been recognized as truth. But the will, in its freedom, can also overlook the truth, opting for what pleases it instead of choosing what is right.*

*In the divorce between understanding and will, the self-centered orientation of wanting is displaced to the unconscious with all its decisions. Thus, while man focuses his understanding on the truth and is governed accordingly by it in the decisions which he makes consciously and purposefully, deep down his unconscious will continues to seek only the satisfaction of his own self. This is why a theologian can write a great work about humility, without therefore being humble. He might even be proud of his profound knowledge of this virtue."*

Here we can see the importance of knowing how to identify and discover these connections. This counts for both personal life and the life of the Church. The authenticity of Christian witness requires that the truth of the gospel be put into practice with both the head and the heart. That is why we need to know how to identify these contradictions in ourselves, and not simply pass over them. Although the harmonization between the understanding and the heart will be a slow process, the recognition of the inner contradiction and the conscious effort to overcome it will be decisive steps towards awakening from blindness.

*"Intellectual pride finds deep, though unconscious, satisfaction in reflecting critically on God and the divine mysteries from a higher perspective. The bolder*

*his reasoning and the more complex his way of expressing it, the more he will be pleased with his talent. It might be right to say that so-called 'critical theologians' are in danger today of running after modern science, instead of proclaiming the truth on the basis of a prayerful theology. But also the proclamation of truth can be an unconscious experience of power, if it is done in a tone of superiority and not as a humble witness to the truth. Also the defence of truth can become an argumentative victory over the enemy, instead of opening him the way to the understanding of truth. Exalted defenders of both a conservative and a progressive theology: both can sin in the same way. The fanatical exaltation that closes itself off from the true elements of the opposing claims shows that, in the end, their goal is not divine truth, but the desire to be right and powerful, even if to achieve this requires the abuse of truth and the wounding of love.*

*We will be able to find adequate, and not only new, ways for the renewal of the Church and of religious life in our time only when we have set aside our attachment to ourselves, opening ourselves up in the depths of our hearts to the truth and love of God, and to the call that he is making to us in this time".*

This text has provided us with a detailed analysis of self-deception, which is certainly quite widespread. If we sincerely ask the Lord to open our eyes, He will surely hear our prayer. And tomorrow I will try to offer some advice so that, with God's help, we can overcome the spiritual blindness of self-deception...