

13. August 2020

“Dominus Jesus”

The topic of yesterday still needs to be deepened and classified, because dealing with other religions and currents of thought from the perspective of faith is essential. Our world has meanwhile become so "small" and on the way of globalization, so that it is helpful for faithful Catholics to know how other religions are to be dealt with in a right way from the view of faith. Also the question how to assess the ecumenical efforts moves some believers.

In addition there is a certain uncertainty whether the uniqueness and peculiarity of the Catholic religion is still to be maintained today, because such recent pronouncements as the document of Abu Dhabi or also interreligious meetings in Assisi (1986) and subsequent meetings, as well as the Pachamama Cult practiced in 2019 in the Vatican Gardens have not few believers worried or even horrified. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear will not be unaware that the Church is currently in a very serious crisis - one could even say identity crisis. It is all the more important to hear authentic voices on this subject and thus to be sure of one's own faith.

There are hardly more credible voices than that of Pope Benedict XVI, who as Prefect of the Faith knew very well that in some developments after Vatican II positions were taken in this area which no longer correspond with the teaching of the Church. For this reason, in the year 2000 he published the document "Dominus Jesus", which I recommend for reading to anyone who wants a clear Catholic instruction in the issues addressed.

In the last few weeks, in my daily meditations on the Father's message through Madre Eugenia, I have raised the issue of our Father's view of people outside the Church. The following was clearly discernible:

God loves all people and calls them to live as his children. This universal call applies to all people, even to those who live in another religion which is not the true religion. He thus calls them to the Catholic Church, which he founded through his Son. In his universal love for all people, it is clear that he wants to lead them to where they can find the right food for their spiritual life, receive the sacraments, receive the right teaching.

The Church, which knows that she is bound by her mission from the Lord and has remained faithful to her mission for many centuries. In the last decades, however, there is a greater insecurity and some things are being relativized that should be self-evident to us Catholics. The consequence can be a kind of "spiritual homelessness" that you experience in your own church.

To briefly outline my own position: I am neither against dialogue nor against ecumenical efforts. I also have great respect for the religious zeal of people belonging to other religions, which can even sometimes be exemplary. Like Jesus, I like to see good deeds from people, like the Good Samaritan, who was held up as an example for his actions, in contrast to the religious representatives of Judaism, who carelessly passed the victim of a criminal act (*cf. Lk 10,30-37*).

But it is precisely the love for people and for those who look for God that obliges us to let the beauty of the Catholic faith shine out as purely as possible through word and deed. Every relativization deprives the other person of the good of the truth which the Lord has entrusted to his Church and which alone sets free (*cf. Jn 8,32*).

Therefore, when, in dialogue with other religions and in efforts to promote ecumenism, the truth of faith is relativized, it is on the wrong path and leads people astray. Only the truth told in love can open to him the way to an unfalsified faith. That is why I very much welcomed the document of the then Prefect of Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger, and I bring it up here!

Under point 4 it says:

“The Church's constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only de facto but also de iure (or in principle). As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded; for example, the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the nature of Christian faith as compared with that of belief in other religions.”

Under point 5:

“As a remedy for this relativistic mentality, which is becoming ever more common, it is necessary above all to reassert the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ. In fact, it must be firmly believed that, in the mystery of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who is “the way, the truth, and the life”

(Jn 14,6), the full revelation of divine truth is given: “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him” (Mt 11:27); “No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed him” (Jn 1,18); “For in Christ the whole fullness of divinity dwells in bodily form” (Col 2,9-10).”

Under point 7:

“For this reason, the distinction between theological faith and belief in the other religions, must be firmly held. If faith is the acceptance in grace of revealed truth, which “makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently”, then belief, in the other religions, is that sum of experience and thought that constitutes the human treasury of wisdom and religious aspiration, which man in his search for truth has conceived and acted upon in his relationship to God and the Absolute.”

Let us first of all note for today:

Faith in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, has been revealed by God. It does not spring from the religious wisdom of mankind, which can certainly be compared with other religious experiences. Nor is it the merit of the person who, through his own research and philosophical knowledge, came across the Christian religion and arrived at the corresponding knowledge. Jesus himself is the truth in his person and authentic faith is the truth. The Church proclaims this truth, which has been entrusted to her, on behalf of God. This applies to all people without exception.

However, as soon as we would put the truth content of the Christian faith on the level of another religion, e.g. if we would consider the dialogue with other religions as an open process of equal religions, we have already carried out an inadmissible process of relativization and overshadowed the light of revealed truth. But in doing so we deprive the other person of the possibility of examining and ordering his or her own religious experience in the light of revealed truth, apart from the fact that we ourselves are no longer able to make a true distinction. Spiritual things are to be judged from God and not primarily from man!

So there is a fundamental difference between the Christian faith and another religion, and it is in this attitude that religions should be encountered. This does not mean that one must act as the teacher and feel enlightened. But we have been entrusted by the Lord with something to serve other people. But this can only happen if we hold fast to the truth, humbly witness to it and do not abandon it for

the sake of a hoped-for unity. This would be a deception of the other person as well as a self-deception and ultimately an infidelity to the Lord!