

18. September 2020

“The joy of the resurrection”

1 Cor 15,12-20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ cannot have been raised either, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is without substance, and so is your faith. What is more, we have proved to be false witnesses to God, for testifying against God that he raised Christ to life when he did not raise him - if it is true that the dead are not raised. For, if the dead are not raised, neither is Christ; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is pointless and you have not, after all, been released from your sins. In addition, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are utterly lost. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable. In fact, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.

St. Paul reminds us how important it is to follow the message of faith fully and unreservedly. Everything we receive in the Christian faith is insurmountable truth and only when we live in it can the fullness of divine life unfold in us.

So if the resurrection of the Lord is denied or undergoes a reinterpretation, then a deep breakthrough in the life of faith has taken place with consequences. Paul even speaks in this context of the senselessness of faith and the emptiness of proclamation.

But it is not only that, we must also take the other point he raises very seriously. When we deny an article of our faith, we contradict God and become false witnesses. Therefore, it is imperative to reject anything that does not conform to the teaching of the Church, whoever it may come from! One should not get involved in any way. If you have the chance to convince the erring one, you can try. If not, then a conversation cannot be continued, a lecture cannot be followed up, a sermon cannot be heard, etc.

It is particularly tragic and reprehensible when false teachings are spread in Catholic Universities or even in seminaries or when the faith is relativized. It is then the "poison of a false doctrine and also of a false practice" which penetrates into the church, the head of the snake rises within.

Faith is a theological virtue.

The Church teaches us the right faith. If it now breaks in at such an essential point as no longer believing in the bodily resurrection of the dead, which we solemnly testify to in the Creed, then the light of grace also dwindles more and more. Other articles of our faith may then also be called into question and it will become dark in the soul. It is not for nothing that the Lord says that not one dot of the Law must be taken away (*cf. Mt 5,18*).

What is said for the resurrection from the dead also applies to other articles of faith. Nothing must be allowed to fall away here, because the whole spiritual work of art of faith belongs together and we can thank the Lord on our knees for entrusting the sure faith to His Church and for carrying it through to this day with the help of the Holy Spirit.

It is all the more important to live in that truth, for faith protects us, as Paul says, before the arrows of evil (*cf. Eph 6,16*). Let us remember that faith is not an intellectual achievement, but a bright gift of God which must be preserved. It is a shield and strong enough to ward off anything that attacks it if we remain in the holy faith.

It is the Holy Spirit who testifies to us that Jesus is the Son of God (*cf. 1 Cor 12,3*) and not just a prophet or a wise teacher in the line of many other teachers. It is the same Spirit who testifies to us also that the teaching of the Church is the truth.

The teaching of the Church is not only something we know through the catechism and which no longer has any influence on us. No, it is a reality of faith which influences our spiritual life.

Let us take the bodily resurrection of Christ as an example.

It directs our inner being towards the eternity, without neglecting the tasks we are set in this world. It already transforms us into real "future people" who can live towards this reality of eternity and always make it present for us, especially when earthly life is drawing to an end and natural forces are dwindling. It helps us not to become entangled in earthly life, but to orientate ourselves towards the ultimate goal and to raise our eyes (*Col 3,2*). It gives us the courage to persevere on the path, especially in suffering. Death is not the last word, but eternal life, and we will receive another body that can no longer age and die. If we internalise the

Resurrection of the Lord again and again, its reality will sink into our soul as lasting hope.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies to the resurrection of the dead, which is valid for all people and invites us to proclaim it through our lives, so that people may receive knowledge of it and turn to the Lord with joy and hope!