

26. September 2020

“An act of the divine sovereignty of Jesus”

Lk 9, 43b-45

Everyone was awestruck by the greatness of God. But while everyone was full of admiration for all he did, he said to his disciples, 'For your part, you must have these words constantly in mind: The Son of man is going to be delivered into the power of men.' But they did not understand what he said; it was hidden from them so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

It was a hard speech for the disciples to hear that their Master will be delivered to men. Perhaps that was why there was already a barrier with them to understand the deeper meaning. Even when the Lord told his disciples on another occasion: “if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6,53), many could not understand it and even turned away from him (cf. verses 60.65)!

The fact that God surrenders himself to man cannot be understood by the natural mind, because Jesus had done nothing that deserved to die. It is understandable that when a person has committed grave guilt, he is able to see a severe punishment - even the death penalty - as just and can see it as atonement. But God himself: Jesus delivers Himself without the slightest guilt to sinners?

This is where we need the supernatural light of faith, the Holy Spirit, to let us enter into this mystery of love, because it is such a mystery. At no time was the Lord, in a kind of powerlessness, at the mercy of betrayal and imprisonment. When, at the time of his capture, Jesus admonished Peter to put his sword into its sheath, he said: “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence?” (Mt 26,53)

Thus we stand in amazement before this great mystery, that the Lord gave his life for mankind and surrendered himself out of love for our Heavenly Father and for mankind, so that in him was accomplished that which gives us men salvation. Such a sacrifice receives its special splendour precisely from voluntariness. It is not, therefore, an event in which we are involved, which we cannot change and which we now make fruitful through our faith by offering it to the Lord, but it is even

more: it is a conscious act of the Son of God, an act of his divine sovereignty, expressed in the surrender to the will of his Father.

The disciples could not yet understand this!

In an older monastic breviary, which I use for the Liturgy of the Hours, the martyrs Justin (martyrdom around 165 AD) and Cyprian (martyrdom 258 AD) are celebrated today. When I read their life story in a hagiography, I came again in touch with this voluntary devotion out of love for God!

St. Justin came from Samaria (Sichem, today Nablus). He was a great seeker of God and converted to the Christian faith on this way. Afterwards he became a frank preacher of the Gospel, which brought strong opponents to the scene. Finally he was accused and together with his disciples (among them a woman named Charito) was brought before the Roman city prefect Rusticus. They were to sacrifice to the gods, and then they would be released. All refused. So they voluntarily surrendered out of love for Jesus.

The same happened to St. Cyprian (218), the bishop of Carthage, who suffered persecution under Emperor Decius and then martyrdom under Emperor Valerian, who aggravated the edict of persecution for Christians.

His judge Galerius Maximus said to him: "The most holy emperors command you to sacrifice". Cyprian: "I do not" Galerius Maximus: "Think it over" Cyprian: "Do what you are ordered to do. In such a just cause, there is no need to consider."

It is again voluntariness that catches the eye, this act of the greatest love that is so beyond our human capacity.

Christians faithful to the Lord must prepare themselves so that martyrdom can come to them too.

In the USA - and also in other countries - statues of saints are toppled, churches are profaned, host sins are committed and much more. These are already clear indications of what is yet to come in more countries!

It is necessary to deepen the faith and to protect it from any secularisation. Certainly not everyone is destined to be martyred by blood, but anyone who seriously wants to follow the Lord must be prepared to bear witness to Jesus in this new pagan, increasingly darkened time.

Let us do this voluntarily out of love for the Lord, even if we will suffer disadvantages and persecution as a result. Jesus gave himself voluntarily out of love. In his school we will also learn this: an act of sovereign love. The Lord will know how to reward it.

Note on behalf of the Balta-Lelija-Group:

The second Balta-Lelija letter is in preparation and its publication is foreseen for the 29th of September. For those who do not yet know what it is about: Balta-Lelija is a movement of spiritual resistance against the anti-Christian spirit in the Church and in the world. For those who have shown interest in receiving more information on this subject, we have created a mailing list. Simply send an email to balta-lelija@jemael.net.