

20. October 2020

“Reflections on the Church”

NOTE: Today we will take only the last verses of the reading for this day.

Eph 2:19-22

So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors; you are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of Gods household.

You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone. Every structure knit together in him grows into a holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built up into a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit.

Our church is not created by human beings, but was brought into being by God and represents a living organism of believers. It is important that we emphasise again and again the supernatural character of the Church, which goes back to the Lord himself, who is the Head (*cf. Col 1:18*). We are the living members of the Mystical Body of Christ and we are called to collaborate so that the construction which God has begun can be completed.

The Church has a great task, because the Kingdom of God is beginning to be present in her! All people are to be led home and remain forever in the Kingdom of our beloved Father. With this thought we remember that the Church is not only made up of its members visible to us, but that it forms a unity with the heavenly and the suffering Church!

We sometimes also distinguish between those who outwardly belong to the visible Church and are baptised, but do not lead a life according to the vocation. Others lead a corresponding life, but for various reasons are not able to make the visible entry! If we follow St. Augustine's reflections on this subject, then the latter belong to the Church, while the former do not fulfil the inner conditions!

We can be very grateful that God has made this Church visible and has preserved it in this way. Again and again there have been attempts to classify the church as belonging only to the spiritual realm and to regard it as a purely spiritual reality. The church with a visible head, however, corresponds to the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, and the Pope has received the task from the Lord to lead the church as

the supreme servant in His Spirit! The bishops as successors of the apostles are involved in this leadership service!

Unfortunately, we must lament that the original unity of all Christians has been largely lost, thus clouding the Christian witness! Mistakes, enmities and competition, instead of fraternal cooperation, have scattered the flock and no longer united it under the one visible Shepherd!

For the last decades, attempts have been made to approach one another, to break down many barriers and heal wounds that have arisen! But we must remember that there is apostasy in the Church and in some ecclesial communities! According to the true unity of the Church through the Holy Spirit, authentic faith must not be pervaded by error, and moral convictions must be the same!

The unity which the Lord offers us when we are incorporated into his Church makes us a dwelling place of God! God comes so close to us that He wants to dwell in us (*cf. Jn 14:23*), and if we allow Him to enter into us through our lives, we become a temple of God in the Spirit! This applies also to families, which can become a house church, but also to each individual!

When we ourselves become a temple of the living God, we understand even more how the Lord builds His church! Everywhere he wants to be present and offer every person fellowship with him! If people listen to us, if we bear witness to the Gospel, then we become the bridge of the living God, and in us the other person not only meets a witness who tells of God and his church, but God and the church are present in our lives.

What wonderful God we are allowed to serve, and we are so honoured and loved by Him that He wants to make us the temple of His glory (*cf. 1 Cor 3:16*)!