

23. October 2020

“Humility, a wonderful flower in the garden of God”

Eph 4:1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you therefore to lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you were called. With all humility and gentleness, and with patience, support each other in love. Take every care to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as one hope is the goal of your calling by God. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

From the prison he suffers for Christ's sake, the apostle to the nations calls upon the congregation to live up to the dignity of its vocation. This is a very profound call, which reminds us to constantly examine our lives before God. It can help us to get rid of any frivolity we might have been led to forget.

It certainly does not mean that we are tensed up in everything we do and anxious to do nothing wrong. This would contradict the freedom of the children of God and also reduce the joy of existence. No, it corresponds to the gift of the fear of God and piety, which does not want to do anything that might offend God, but rather strives to please Him who has given us our vocation. This awareness that we have been given life, as human beings and as Christians is a great help to enter into the space of humility that is so important for the healthy development of our vocation.

Consequently, the beloved apostle first of all mentions the humility in which we should live.

Humility has nothing to do with servility and artificial subordination in a slavish attitude. It is first of all the plain and simple realisation that we have received our existence and all the gifts that are necessary for it. Every human being was small and helpless in his mother's womb and contributed nothing to his existence. These are realisations of reality that determine the basic tone of our existence. If then someone would feel that he is worth nothing, let it be said that his existence is an act of love of our heavenly Father, as it is for all other people. This is where his true dignity grows, namely to be a beloved creature of God. If this double knowledge penetrates deeply within us, humility should be able to grow as fruit.

The acknowledgement and realisation of the reality God has planned for us deepens humility when we realise that God is teaching us how this life entrusted to us should unfold. He gives us the laws of nature and His commandments that govern our lives. They are also given to us as a gift. To accept and obey them is again an act of submitting to reality and making it clear that we do not possess the true key to life.

More and more humility can deepen as we face the event of salvation. Again, it is a gift. Man cannot free himself from the cords of evil, he is not able to free himself from death and sin, but he needs a Saviour. To realise this gratefully lowers humility even more deeply, accompanied by the gratitude that the Lord does not let us degenerate in our imperfection, in our inclination to evil, in our self-centredness, but leans down to us in incomparable humility and redeems us on the cross.

This virtue becomes even more radiant when we look at our vocation.

Again we do have it from ourselves, but God gives it to us. We are not only His creatures, but we are called to live as His children and to bear witness to His love in the world. In order to fulfil this vocation, we again need his help, his grace, which he always offers us. The grateful recognition of these facts continues to shape our humility. We place ourselves in joyful submission to our Father and we praise his greatness and goodness.

In this way we can understand and realise the word of St. Augustine. He says that humility means to submit to the higher and than true greatness is born. Pride places oneself high and thus becomes low (*cf. Lk 14:11*).

It is a simple path to humility which I have described: the realisation and affirmation of the God-given reality. From my point of view it seems organic and passable for everyone. In this way, humility grows in secret into a wonderful flower in the garden of the Lord and at the same time becomes a motivation to strive with all our strength in the Lord for what has been entrusted to us and is to be our contribution to the Kingdom of God. And also here he will do all that is beyond our strength! So may he be praised in everything.