

6. December 2020

**“The birth of the Lord in us”
General reflections**

When we talk about the coming of the Lord, we think of a triple coming of Jesus: the historical coming with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the birth of the Lord in us and the coming of the exalted Lord at the end of times.

In this second week of Advent we contemplate the presence of Jesus in our hearts. It is crucial that Jesus also lives in our hearts, because this is where the transformation of man takes place: To let Jesus into our hearts means to give Him shelter, to give space in our souls to the love of God.

We know it from our human relationships: If we carry someone in our heart, it means that we have taken him deeper into our lives and share in his life. In a certain way, he lives within us even if we do not communicate with him externally. This is how it is when Jesus enters our hearts and we give our heart to Him, as it is said in the moving Christmas carol “Zu Bethlehem geboren”: “I will give him my heart and all that I have”.

To enter into a heart-relationship with the Lord, i.e. to respond to His love is already a piece of “Heaven on Earth”, which will then be completed in eternity in an undisturbed union of hearts! This is the aim of our existence to see and contemplate God and to live forever in complete unity with him and with all who belong to him.

How this path of unification looks like, which begins here on earth, and which steps are necessary for it, will be the subject of this week's reflections. With this theme we enter the realm of true mysticism.

True Mysticism is not something mysterious and it would be fundamentally wrong to regard it as something strange - true mysticism is man's inner experience of God's presence in the soul.

There are many saints who have written about it and have recorded this inner path of the soul. Among the most famous teachers of true mysticism are St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis of Sales or even a Johannes Tauler and others.

These are not speculative writings that move in semi-darkness, but God has given such teachers, who also exist in Eastern Christianity, a light of knowledge of how the soul is transformed by the increasing presence of Christ.

Even if not all people on earth are called to ascend to the last “heights of true mysticism” as a St. Getrude of Helfta for example - according to God's choice and calling - God wants to dwell and work in our hearts. Whoever longs for silence and solitude, whoever looks for inner calm, whoever follows the train of the heart for intimate communion with Jesus, begins to internalise life.

This internalisation is not only beneficial to one's own soul, but, since it is about growth in love and the transformation of our heart, it affects our whole life and thus also the relationship with other people. If we carry Jesus deeper in our hearts and give room to His love, then other people will also notice this grace in us. This does not only refer to the practical deeds of charity, but the whole way of man starts to change under the wise guidance of the Holy Spirit. We become more like Jesus. That is the essence of love, that 'we become more like the Beloved, we become one with Him.

In these coming days of Advent, we are cordially invited to deepen our relationship with Jesus. The coming reflections may help us to do this, and I recommend these reflections especially to Mary, Mother of God, from whom we would like to learn how we can give the Lord an even deeper entrance into our hearts and a fully answer.