

15. January 2021

“His place of rest”

*Heb 4:1-5.11*

*Let us beware, then: since the promise never lapses, none of you must think that he has come too late for the promise of entering his place of rest. We received the gospel exactly as they did; but hearing the message did them no good because they did not share the faith of those who did listen. We, however, who have faith, are entering a place of rest, as in the text: And then in my anger I swore that they would never enter my place of rest. Now God's work was all finished at the beginning of the world; as one text says, referring to the seventh day: And God rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. And, again, the passage above says: They will never reach my place of rest. Let us, then, press forward to enter this place of rest, or some of you might copy this example of refusal to believe and be lost.*

His place of rest!

What a beautiful term is used here with the admonition to strive for this land of rest!

The place of God's rest is already open to us now, though still under the conditions of this world's imperfections. Jesus calls out to us: “Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Mt 11:29)

This place of rest we find in following the Lord, for here our soul finds its home! “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life” says Peter (Jn 6:68). “Where shall we go?” we repeat with Peter. Anything else is neither the “place of rest”, nor true peace. “Restless is our heart until it finds peace in Thee” recognises St Augustine, after seeking God and having previously travelled many roads with errors.

So we will not be able to find the “place of rest” anywhere else than in the heart of our heavenly Father, which he has opened so wide for us in his Son. There we are at home, there our soul finds rest and can immerse itself in the love of God.

„His place of rest“: it is not just any “place”; nor is it indifferent whether it is found or not, nor is it a different place for everyone! It is the one and only place of his rest: where God dwells, where his gaze of love on us finds the entrance and can dwell as with the Blessed Virgin Mary: “He has looked upon the humiliation of his servant” (Lk 1:48). There where God can rest from all His works in the heart of man and we ourselves become the “place of His rest” the Shabath of God!

When we rest in God and He in us, then the beautiful words of Song of Songs 3:5: *“do not rouse, do not wake my beloved before she pleases”* applies.

We have spoken in the past meditation of building an inner cell, a temple in the heart, in which we are to adore the Holy Trinity and hold intimate intercourse with Him. In this way the "His place of rest" is created in us when the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, has taken up residence in us (cf. Jn 14:23).

In the “Message of the Father” to Madre Eugenia Ravasio it is said:

*“For me, the Holy Spirit is a very suitable means to dwell not only in the tabernacle, but also in the souls of all those who are in a state of grace, to establish my throne there and to remain there forever as a true loving Father who protects and assists his child. No one can imagine the joy I feel when I am alone with a soul.”*

The promise to come into “His place of rest” is still valid, the door of grace is still open for people, “the year of favour from the Lord” is not over (cf. Lk 4:19). But we do not know how long it will last. That is why the apostle admonishes that no one is left behind, i.e. we have to take care of our brother and sister so that the time does not pass by unused.

In this time of - one can almost say global - confusion, it is especially important both: to deepen our personal relationship with the Lord and to be vigilant about how we can serve others.

We know quite well how much fear is spreading in relation to the Corona crisis. Where should people go if they do not know the “His place of rest”? They then place their hope in this or that and wish to be able to return to "normal life". But what is “normal life”? Is sin part of it?

If the Lord allows such a crisis, then it has a deeper meaning and is a call to seek the land of His rest, i.e. Himself. People must stop walking paths of disaster and return to the path of God's commandments if they do not want to lose Eternal Life.

The Word of God is what is only save in this world. It must be received in faith, otherwise people will not, as today's text says, enter the land of His rest. Just when it becomes dark and the darkness increases, people need a clear light. And this is God himself.