

13 February 2021

“Adam, where are you?”

*Gen 3:9-24*

*But Yahweh God called to the man. 'Where are you?' he asked. 'I heard the sound of you in the garden,' he replied. 'I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.' 'Who told you that you were naked?' he asked. 'Have you been eating from the tree I forbade you to eat?' The man replied, 'It was the woman you put with me; she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.' Then Yahweh God said to the woman, 'Why did you do that?' The woman replied, 'The snake tempted me and I ate.' Then Yahweh God said to the snake, 'Because you have done this, Accursed be you of all animals wild and tame! On your belly you will go and on dust you will feed as long as you live. I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel.' To the woman he said: I shall give you intense pain in childbearing, you will give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will dominate you. To the man he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, Accursed be the soil because of you! Painfully will you get your food from it as long as you live. It will yield you brambles and thistles, as you eat the produce of the land. By the sweat of your face will you earn your food, until you return to the ground, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you shall return.' The man named his wife 'Eve' because she was the mother of all those who live. Yahweh God made tunics of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them. Then Yahweh God said, 'Now that the man has become like one of us in knowing good from evil, he must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick from the tree of life too, and eat and live for ever!' So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken. He banished the man, and in front of the garden of Eden he posted the great winged creatures and the fiery flashing sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.*

*"Adam, where are you?"*

This is the first reaction of God to the Fall that has been handed down to us and lets us look deep into the heart of God. It could also have meant: what have you done? where have you got to? All of this is included in the call “*Adam where are you?*”

On our journey of following Christ we come to know more and more the love of God. Paul writes to the church in Ephesus (3:17-19): “*Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, with all God's holy people you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond knowledge, you may be filled with the utter fullness of God.*”

To recognise this love of God, to respond to it and to live united with this love in time and eternity is the purpose of our existence. Everything else grows out of it. And love is true life, only through love does it flourish.

With the Fall, man broke away from the natural communion of love with God. And God?

*Adam, where are you?*

He now searches for his creature and this search continues until the end of days. God is always on the lookout for man to see if he will return to him. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus presents it to us. The father looks out for the son who squanders his inheritance (*cf. Lk 15:11-32*).

The great gift of paradisiacal innocence was lost, this direct communion with God in true harmony, this wonderful inheritance. Instead, the toil of labour, the pains of childbirth and the constant struggle against those powers of darkness that seduced man - the consequences of disobedience.

God had foreseen all this, for nothing is unknown to him. And in his loving omnipotence, he now wants to redeem man from his fallenness. It is a long way, for fallen man becomes more and more entangled in evil. God's love, however, remains. He has not separated from man. He always seeks him, speaks to him through the prophets, never tires of declaring his love to his people Israel.

But how often does God experience man's rejection and unfaithfulness? How often has he been insulted. How often could he have destroyed the world for the sake of so many sins, right up to our own day!

But God cannot disown his own self (*cf. 2 Tim 2:11-13*). His love is too great for us - so great that he himself comes to us in his Son.

Now he calls down from the cross: “*Adam, where are you?*” “Humanity where are you?”

The closed gates of paradise are opened, the fruit of the tree of life is given to us (*cf. Rev 22:2*), the wedding feast is prepared (*cf. Rev 19:7-9*). The way to God is open to everyone who accepts God's way to us through the Saviour's cross.

What is still missing? The answer of man.

Only a few pass through the narrow gate (*cf. Mt 7:14*), but it is wide enough for all.

What keeps them out?

The temptations of the world, disobedience, the wiles of Satan...

Then the Lord calls down once more from the cross: “*Adam where are you?*” He holds out his open heart to people, regardless of whether they accept his love or not. But it hurts when they pass by love carelessly or even mock it.

And once again the Lord calls out! “*Adam, where are you?*”

He will repeat the call until the end of time.

God grant that men may hear him and answer!