

21. March 2021

**“Life and death to glorify God”**

*Jn 12:20-33*

*Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them: Now the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me, must follow me, and my servant will be with me wherever I am. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name! A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will again glorify it.' The crowd standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. 'Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself.' By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.*

The hour of the Lord has come and he is prepared for it. Until this hour he has fulfilled the whole mission of his Father, and now he is glorified, for he fulfils his mission to the end and crowns it with the gift of life. This voluntary act out of love for God and for us human beings cannot be fully understood in its depth, for it is the Son of God who gives his life! But we can worship him and never stop thanking him, now and in eternity.

Jesus does not avoid this hour, even though he says three times in Gethsemane: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it." (Mt 26:39) He consciously accepts it, for this hour was prepared for him and glorifies the name of God; and this is the innermost desire of Jesus: to glorify the Father, to make him known on earth and to invite people to follow him trustingly!

But there remains for us not only the act of worshipping God, which in itself is more than enough, but the Lord calls us to imitate Him. We too are to be prepared for our hour, to approach it consciously in the fulfilment of our task on earth, so that not only our life glorifies God, but also our death. God knows this hour, and it becomes for us the whole homecoming into the kingdom of our Father. Therefore, we should live with the consciousness of death, even though we are still in the midst of life or even younger.

The grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies bears abundant fruit (*cf. Jn 12:24*). If we also understand our death in this way, then it does not simply break off our life, but completes the work on earth and becomes the glorification of the Father. And if we are then followed by the works done in God, then our mission does not end either, but takes on a new dimension. A Therèse of Lisieux told us that she will do greater works from heaven than on earth!

Until this final act on earth comes, we are already called to “die”, that is, to die to the life that does not serve the glorification of God and to look for the life that serves God. As today's text tells us, the Father will honour us for such a life! And that is enough!

What else should we look out for? For the honour of men? For wealth? For outward beauty? For the praise of the world? After a comfortable life? For power? After pleasures?

All this cannot stand before the judgement of God, it burns like the chaff of wheat (*cf. Mt 3:12*) and it is senseless and harmful to reach out for the perishable things.

Let us accept the invitation during Lent to examine our lives in the light of the Lord and to separate ourselves from the unnecessary things, to gain inner freedom and to consciously remember that the glorification of God through our life and through our death awakens the deepest dimension of our existence! The joy that arises from such a path is already the beginning of heavenly joy, which then, when we are completely at home, is accomplished in an overwhelming way and remains with us forever!