



Balta Lelija

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“Faith overcomes the World”

1 Jn 5:1-6

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and whoever loves the father loves the son. In this way we know that we love God's children, when we love God and keep his commandments. This is what the love of God is: keeping his commandments. Nor are his commandments burdensome, because every child of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who can overcome the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? He it is who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with water alone but with water and blood, and it is the Spirit that bears witness, for the Spirit is Truth.

The Word of the Lord always puts us clearly in the light and we cannot be grateful enough for its teaching. How strong today is there an unhealthy tendency in our churches to "unite with the world", as if this could ever have been the goal of faith. How much we have to experience, especially in this Corona crisis, that the Church does not raise its voice and give orientation to the people. Instead, it listens almost entirely to what the rulers of this world have to tell us.

Today's text says that faith overcomes the world. In this case, it is an enemy who is not “begotten of God”, who does not testify that Jesus is the Christ. The opposition to the world is clearly stated.

“If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you do not belong to the world, because my choice of you has drawn you out of the world, that is why the world hates you.” (Jn 15:19)

So we face the hatred of the world because we do not belong to the world. This is, however, a completely different view than we know, for example, from a Catholicism characterised by modernism, which would like to reconcile itself with the world and is more or less absorbed in it.

The biblical findings, on the other hand, testify that God is above this world and therefore in faith there is a fundamental distance to the world from the beginning, because it passes away with its lust.

It is clearly expressed by the Apostle John: *“Do not love the world or what is in the world. If anyone does love the world, the love of the Father finds no place in him, because everything there is in the world - disordered bodily desires, disordered desires of the eyes, pride in possession - is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world, with all its disordered desires, is passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains for ever.”* (1 Jn 2:15-17)

If we take these words in, then it becomes clear that we cannot be Christian at all and at the same time live in a naive relationship with this world, e.g. adopting its values. If this happens, then the world - if we do not put the appropriate distance in Christ - will seduce us and shape our thinking. The world would not be defeated and overcome by faith, but we would become like it and increasingly worldly in our thoughts and actions. Therefore, the apostle's admonition is to be followed: *“Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and mature.”* (Rom 12:2)

Now this work is done through faith. As a supernatural virtue, it bears witness to God and makes God present in all spheres of existence. Since there is no area that is closed to God, it is faith which examines everything in the light of God and, through the discernment of spirits, gives the right judgement.

The thinking of the world cannot judge its works at all in the light of God. It needs the supernatural light of faith, but as a rule it does not accept it: *“The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had come into being through him, and the world did not recognise him. He came to his own and his own people did not accept him.”* (Jn 1:9-11)

As soon as our own thinking is no longer properly enlightened by faith, in a false adaptation to the world, the discernment of spirits becomes increasingly clouded. Worldly thinking remains closed in itself to faith, for only the latter opens the light so that the darkness gives way. The victory of faith therefore consists in witnessing to Jesus, through whom the world came into being, who gives its meaning to existence. Therefore, every knowledge in faith is also a penetration of darkness, a snatching away of man from the transitoriness of his life, a victory of light over darkness.

This makes it understandable how great the danger is not to have a correct assessment of our relationship to the world. It is not our home. Faith brings light to the world and overcomes the darkness in which it lives and invites it to follow the

one who created and redeemed it. Reaching out to the world can only consist in witnessing to it the love of Christ, proclaiming the mercy of God and calling it to conversion to Christ. However, as soon as we accept worldly thinking and behaviour, faith, that is, the true light, is obscured. How is it then still possible to be the light of this world? (*cf. Mt 5:14*)

Let us never deny our mission as Christians by conforming to the thinking of the world and thus the salt loses its taste (*cf. Mt 5:13*).