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“God Knows How to Use Even Evil”

Mt 10:16-23

'At this, Judah went up to him and said, 'May it please my lord, let your servant have a word privately with my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. My lord questioned his servants, 'Have you father or brother? „And we said to my lord, "We have an old father, and a younger brother born of his old age. His brother is dead, so he is the only one by that mother now left, and his father loves him. "Then you said to your servants, "Bring him down to me, so that I can set eyes on him. But you said to your servants, "If your youngest brother does not come down with you, you will not be admitted to my presence again." When we went back to your servant my father, we repeated to him what my lord had said. So when our father said, "Go back and get us a little food," we said, "We cannot go down. We shall go only if our youngest brother is with us for, unless our youngest brother is with us, we shall not be admitted to the man's presence. "So your servant our father said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two children. When one of them left me, I supposed that he must have been torn to pieces, and I have never seen him since. If you take this one from me too and any harm comes to him, you will send my white head down to Sheol with grief. "Then Joseph could not control his feelings in front of all his retainers, and he exclaimed, 'Let everyone leave me.' No one therefore was present with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers, but he wept so loudly that all the Egyptians heard, and the news reached Pharaoh's palace. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?' His brothers could not answer him, they were so dumbfounded at seeing him. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' When they had come closer to him he said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not grieve, do not reproach yourselves for having sold me here, since God sent me before you to preserve your lives. '

Who does not know the moving story of Joseph and his brothers (cf. Gen 37:2-36;39-45)? A story of grave guilt and magnanimous forgiveness, in which love triumphs in the end.

This is the permanent message that God wants to convey to us men! In the end, guilt and evil will not triumph, but the Lord's love and forgiveness will overcome all. God's incomparable wisdom, worthy of worship, knows how to use even evil

and wicked ways for our salvation. The story of Joseph is a clear testimony to this: “*God sent me before you to preserve your lives*”, he tells his brothers.

We can profit greatly from this moving story, and let its teaching sink deep into us. The appropriate fruit of this would be a deeper trust in God. There are so many situations in our lives that we do not hold in our hands and cannot understand. This is especially true for misfortunes and difficulties of all kinds. In such circumstances, only trust can help us not to fall into bitterness.

But it also counts for the great evil of sin and guilt. Joseph forgave his brothers, who had first wanted to kill him but then decided to sell him into *slavery* (cf. *Gen 37:12-36*). He did not want to take revenge on them, but consoled his guilt-ridden and bewildered brothers with these words: “*Do not grieve, do not reproach yourselves for having sold me* “.

Now confidence is not to be confused with natural optimism. It is also quite different from the fatalistic attitude that resigns itself and lets everything happen to it, with the feeling that it can't change it anyway, even though it may keep saying that “God will fix it”.

No! Trust is a total surrender to the Lord; it is holding on to his goodness. Such an act is easier when we gratefully acknowledge God's providence and care for us. The only obstacle that stands in the way of our remembering and thanking again and again for His goodness, and thus increasing our trust, is the fact that we are easily forgetful and do not internalise God's benefits to us.

Trust becomes even deeper when we perceive God's goodness in salvific events, as it is offered to us, for example, in the sacraments, in the Word of God and in so many aids for our spiritual life. An obstacle here can sometimes be our spiritual laziness, which prevents us from perceiving and making use of all these gifts as we should, and thus from growing in trust.

Trust becomes existential when it comes to carrying a heavy cross, whatever it may be. Here another measure of confidence is demanded of us, which, in the midst of the dark night, is nourished only by the light of faith. But it is precisely here that the possibility opens up for trust to take root in the depths of our soul, depending on how heavy the cross is and how we bear it with God's help. In times of tribulation, God has never abandoned us, even though we may feel otherwise. Trust sustains us in this darkness, and under the cross it is born as a shining light

and an invincible strength. For if we trust in God to the depths of our being, what then can happen to us?

“Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ -- can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence; (...) We come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us.” (Rom 8:35.37)