

5. March 2022

## The way of simplicity

Isa 58:9b-14

*Then you will cry for help and Yahweh will answer; you will call and he will say, 'I am here.' If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist and malicious words, if you deprive yourself for the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkest hour will be like noon. Yahweh will always guide you, will satisfy your needs in the scorched land; he will give strength to your bones and you will be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose waters never run dry. Your ancient ruins will be rebuilt; you will build on age -- old foundations. You will be called 'Breach-mender', 'Restorer of streets to be lived in'. If you refrain from breaking the Sabbath, from taking your own pleasure on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath 'Delightful', and the day sacred to Yahweh 'Honourable', if you honour it by abstaining from travel, from seeking your own pleasure and from too much talk, then you will find true happiness in Yahweh, and I shall lead you in triumph over the heights of the land. I shall feed you on the heritage of your father Jacob, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.*

It is really that simple! If the People listen to the voice of the Lord and follow His guidance, God's love can be poured out unhindered into the lives of men, and the plan He has for each individual and for the peoples becomes a palpable reality and full of blessing. It is so simple and consistent! If only the big Ego, which often has other ideas and illusions, and so easily forgets God's guidelines, were not there.

On God's side, things remain simple, even though on man's side so many complications and entanglements arise; so many resistances and slips; so many sins and mistakes...

But God remains faithful to himself and continues to open up the simple way for us, even at the cost of the Passion and Death of his Beloved Son: it is the uncomplicated way of spiritual childhood, of friendship with God and even of a spousal relationship with Him.

God integrates into His plan all the detours and deviations on man's path, and continues to accompany him and to call him again and again to conversion. However, sometimes men misunderstand God's goodness, his long-suffering and gentleness, and think that they can go on in their disordered life, simply appealing to divine mercy. But they are missing the point: God can never approve of the disorder! He loves the sinner, but not the sin! He loves his people Israel, but not the ways they

often took!

So in today's reading the Lord names the conditions for a good life to develop in an abundance of grace; for the light of his people to shine and the darkness to fade. In fact, the recipe is very simple!

Let us embark this Lent on God's simple way and get rid of all complications. We know what we have to make our Christian life fruitful; we know that our Father's love is always with us, winning us over so that we are even more united to Him. Perhaps we also have at least an idea about the next steps we need to take. So why not simply take them? Let us give up what holds us back; let us ask the Lord to untie all our attachments, which prevent us from moving forward and make our life even more fruitful!

The venerable Anna de Guigné, a little and simple soul before the Lord, said a wonderful phrase: "Nothing is difficult when one loves God."

This is simple and shows us the way forward: Love for God has to grow and self-love has to give way. This is the way!

In reality this is also simple, even if it involves effort, to overcome the heaviness of our nature, its limitations, its curiosity, its attachment to the world, its inconstancy, etc....

God assists us on this path, and with each step we take to love Him more than our own interests, love will grow.

Perhaps there is one more suggestion from this reading that is important for us Christians. We see in this text that the Lord places great value on the Sabbath as the holy day of the week. I have noticed that the Sunday, which has replaced the Sabbath as a holy day in the Christian world, is becoming less and less important. I have noticed this particularly in Latin America! Wouldn't it be important to reconquer the sanctity of Sunday, at least on a personal level? I think it would be a joy for the Lord and a blessing for our souls!