

9. September 2022

True simplicity (Part I)

NOTE: In today's and tomorrow's meditation, we will leave the usual framework of daily meditations, usually based on the reading or the Gospel of the day, to develop a theme that is very significant for our spiritual life: simplicity.

Simplicity, properly understood, is a great value. Indeed, simplicity does not mean simplifying all things and not being able to think in a differentiated way. Rather, in its essence, true simplicity means that we look at all things from God's perspective, so that each is given its rightful place. It is the Holy Spirit who puts everything in order, both in the inner and in the outer life. A life ordered in the Spirit becomes simple, because it is guided from above by God, and everything refers back to Him. Thus an inner unity of the whole life emerges. It is no longer a life made up of various elements, often contradictory to each other, elements that disperse with their immanent dynamics; but the whole life is defined by a "common denominator", by a fundamental orientation. We Christians, who want to follow the Lord seriously, would say that this fundamental orientation that determines our whole life is to fulfil the Will of God. Thus, it becomes simple in its approach.

For complicated people, difficulties arise in moving towards this luminous simplicity. Because of their inner tensions and various complexes, they find it difficult to put into practice what each situation requires. They are often blocked by unhelpful feelings and become too preoccupied with themselves instead of giving the appropriate response. Life in general and situations in particular are complicated in vain, there is a tendency to make a drama out of simple contexts and so the simplest tasks become big problems.

Some people confuse this complication with profoundness. They do not understand that the deeper and more sublime something is, the simpler it is.

Let us take the way of following Christ as an example. The deeper it becomes, the simpler - and uncomplicated - it will be, because the goal of the spiritual life is to be united to God in love and truth. So, if love grows day by day in the following of the

Lord, we will be getting closer to this goal and we will know God better, so that we will more easily allow ourselves to be guided by Him. Love makes everything easier and simpler, because it becomes a powerful inner motivation, which pushes us to do everything according to this love. *"Nothing is difficult when you love God"*, said the little venerable Anne de Guigné.

There are also people who dwell more on what they find interesting than on the truth. They get entangled in all sorts of thoughts and theories, get carried away by errors that appear to be very intellectual, wander into the paths of the most complex ideas and finally succumb to the limitless plurality of the false.

Then, if one does not seek the truth, which is one, it could easily happen that one enters into a field of errors, of which, unlike the truth, there is a countless variety.

It can also happen that, having already a complicated psyche, one complicates it more and more, because one is always occupied with oneself and one's own ideas. Perhaps even this complication is regarded as a well-developed intellect. Then, instead of suffering under one's own complication and trying to get out of it, one gives it space and nourishes it.

From what we have said so far, we can identify two basic elements that will lead our life towards true simplicity: love and truth.

"Love and do what you will" - said St. Augustine, expressing with great simplicity what is substantial and most profound in life. If love - and we mean true love - becomes the primary motivation for our actions, then we will always know what we should do. This is not the appropriate framework to explain in detail the steps to be taken to put it into practice. Suffice it for now to understand how this principle - love - becomes the common denominator of our whole life and simplifies it.

The same is true of truth. If we seek the truth - and the Lord will be very pleased if we do so, since He Himself is the truth (cf. Jn 14:6) - then we have a simple basic principle, according to which everything else is measured. Thus our life becomes very concentrated. We will no longer be attracted by the variety of possibilities, but will simply be guided by what is true, what is right, what is the right answer for this or that situation.

In tomorrow's meditation, we will develop this theme further.