

16. September 2022

The Joy of the Resurrection

1 Cor 15:12-20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ cannot have been raised either, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is without substance, and so is your faith. What is more, we have proved to be false witnesses to God, for testifying against God that he raised Christ to life when he did not raise him - if it is true that the dead are not raised. For, if the dead are not raised, neither is Christ; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is pointless and you have not, after all, been released from your sins. In addition, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are utterly lost. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable. In fact, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep.

St. Paul shows us how important it is to accept the message of the faith in its entirety and without any shortcuts. Everything that our Christian faith tells us is an immutable truth, and only by living in it can the fullness of divine life unfold in us.

Then, if the Resurrection of the Lord were to be denied or interpreted differently, there would be a profound disruption in the life of faith, which would have consequences. In this context, St. Paul even goes so far as to say that, without the Resurrection, all our faith would be vain and meaningless, and the proclamation would be empty...

But it is not only that... We must also take very seriously the other aspect he raises. When we deny an article of our faith, we are contradicting God and becoming false witnesses. Therefore, it is fundamental that we reject everything that does not agree with the doctrine of the Church, no matter who it comes from... On no account should we listen to it! If one has the opportunity to convince the errant, one might try. Otherwise, there is no point in prolonging the conversation or continuing to listen to a teaching that is not in conformity with authentic doctrine, etc.

It would be particularly tragic and reprehensible if in Catholic theology or even in seminaries false doctrines were spread or the truths of faith were relativized. Then, the poison of false doctrines and practices would penetrate the Church; the head of the serpent would rise...

Let us remember that faith is a theological virtue! The Church teaches us the right faith. Now, if on such an elementary point an disruption is allowed, such as that of no longer believing in the bodily Resurrection of the dead, which we solemnly profess in the Creed, then the light of faith will be more and more dissipate. Then, other articles of faith may also begin to be questioned, and thus darkness enters the soul. For as the Lord said, "not one dot, not one little stroke," would lose its validity (cf. Mt 5:18).

What we have said with regard to the Resurrection of the dead applies also to the other contents of the faith. No intrusion should be allowed, because this work of art-the spiritual edifice of faith-is an inseparable whole. We can thank the Lord on our knees for having entrusted his Church with a sure and unchanging faith, and for having preserved it to this day, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

It is therefore extremely important to live according to the truth of faith, for it protects us from the fiery darts of the enemy, as St. Paul says in the Letter to the Ephesians (6:16). Let us remember that faith is not an intellectual achievement, but a brilliant gift of God, which we, for our part, must embrace and guard. Faith is a shield strong enough to ward off all that attacks it, as long as we hold fast to it...

It is the Holy Spirit who lets us know that Jesus is the Son of God (cf. 1 Cor 12:3), and not simply a prophet or a wise man like so many others. It is the same Spirit who testifies that the doctrine of the Church is the truth.

This doctrine is not simply something that we learned in the catechism, and now has no pertinence to our lives. No! It is a reality of faith, which has repercussions on our spiritual life!

Let us take as an example the bodily Resurrection of Christ... This certainty of faith focuses us on the hereafter, without neglecting the tasks entrusted to us in this world now. The Resurrection shapes us to be people who aspire to *"things above, not the things that are on the earth"* (Col 3:2); things which are directed towards the heavenly realities

and calls them to mind, especially when earthly life is coming to an end and bodily strength begins to fade. Faith in the Resurrection helps us not to become entangled in earthly life, but to focus on our ultimate goal and to raise our gaze upwards. It gives us the strength to persevere along the way, particularly in suffering. Death does not have the last word; but eternal life! Then will we receive a glorious body that will neither age nor die.

If we internalize more and more the Resurrection of the Lord, this reality will settle in our soul as a permanent hope. The Resurrection of Jesus bears witness to the Resurrection of the dead, which counts for all people, and invites us to proclaim it through our lives, so that people may learn that the Lord is risen and turn to him with joy.