

3. January 2023

Whoever abides in Him does not sin

1 Jn 2:29-3:1-6

*If you know that he is upright you must recognise that everyone whose life is upright is a child of his. You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children - which is what we are! The reason why the world does not acknowledge us is that it did not acknowledge him. My dear friends, we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is. Whoever treasures this hope of him purifies himself, to be as pure as he is. Whoever sins, acts wickedly, because all sin is wickedness. Now you are well aware that he has appeared in order to take sins away, and that in him there is no sin. No one who remains in him sins, and whoever sins has neither seen him nor recognised him.*

The terrible and greatest evil of this world is sin. Sin means separation from God and in this passage St. John describes it as "iniquity".

God gave us the commandments so that we have a clear orientation as to what corresponds to His holy Will. In the end, every sin represents a rebellion against God, even if the person is not aware of it. This is the objective reality, but the subjective issue - that is, the level of guilt a person has - is another matter. For example, if he has not heard enough about the existence of sin and has, consequently, a poorly formed conscience, then the degree of his guilt cannot be the same as if he were someone who knows the divine commandments very well. On the objective level, however, sin will always be a rebellion and a rejection of God, and at the same time a link to the world of lies.

It is important that we are very clear about how serious sin is, otherwise we will not be able to understand God's true mercy and what it means that Jesus came to take away the sin of the world. If sin is trivialised or relativised, we cannot truly assimilate God's love or understand the meaning of Redemption.

Instead of leaving us at the mercy of sin's destruction, God offers us, through the forgiveness of sins, a new life. Sin with all its destructive effects is to be overcome by the

grace of God. All the structures of sin that have formed within us need to be touched by Him and transferred to the ordered life of grace. In this way, our thoughts and feelings will be more and more conformed to God, and we will become able to serve God and man in His Spirit.

*"We are now children of God"*, the Apostle John tells us, but an even greater glory awaits us, which is not yet manifest. This glory begins to shine through when we begin to live as children of God, when his Spirit works more and more in us and transforms us. Then the image of God begins to be re-established in us, and we notice how the virtues can grow, how our inner self is more and more directed towards the Lord, despite all the weaknesses that still remain in us. But what will we be like in eternity?

We can get an idea when we look at Our Lord Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary. In her we can see in a special way how God's grace permeated her whole life. If she already radiated so much light in her earthly life, how much more so now that she lives in the glory of God's presence!

This light also shines in the saints. By looking at them, we can get an idea of how God intended man and of the glory that awaits us in eternity. We can already long for it with immense joy!

If we could contemplate for a moment what we will be like after our earthly life (if we conclude it in God's grace), living in the presence of the Lord, then we would be filled with awe and long to be there as soon as possible. This longing would also help us to walk our way with greater fervour, because - as St. Paul says - *"all that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the glory which is destined to be disclosed for us"* (Rom 8:18).

From this perspective, it becomes all the more important to start working now on our inner transformation.

With God's grace, we should try to strip ourselves of all works of darkness (Rom 13:13) and allow His grace to erase the effects of sin in us. Then we will be able to help others who are still captivated by sin and have not yet encountered God's love, or at least have not known it sufficiently.