

3. May 2023

## No decline in evangelism

Jn 14:6-14

*Jesus said: I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him. Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*

*"I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me".*  
This is the decisive word of the Lord, on which everything must be oriented!

Of course it is necessary to understand this sentence correctly, because it does not mean that every person who has not known the message of salvation and consequently has not had an encounter with Jesus is necessarily condemned. God will know how to judge every situation justly! But this can in no way reduce our zeal; rather it can increase our gratitude to God.

The serious question we must ask ourselves is whether we have truly internalised the impulse that comes with this word of the Lord: To the seeker, we point the way to Jesus; to the one who asks for the truth, we proclaim the Lord; and to the one who thirsts for life, we show the source.

How can we prevent our evangelistic efforts from flagging?

In the first place, it is important that we deepen more and more the fact that mission is a task, not a matter of taste or a personal decision. To pass on the Word means to give life, for *"Human beings live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Mt 4:4).

Without falling into scruples or a kind of "evangelisation stress", we must be aware that, at a certain level, proclamation is a life-saving measure. The divine life has to awaken, dwell and be preserved in man. The "awakening" of the divine life would be, so to speak, the first evangelisation, the sowing of the Word, the going in search of those who do not know life and are still in the shadow of death. Then, in order for the divine life to dwell in the persons who have found it, it is necessary to help them to cultivate it so that it can grow. Finally, to preserve the divine life means to protect it from all attacks, both from without and from within, and to hold fast to faith.

It is relatively easy to reach someone who has already set out in search of God, to give him or her what he or she longs for. On the other hand, it is much more difficult to find those who are indifferent. It seems that whatever one says or does seems to sink in a sea of indifference. In these circumstances, it can happen that one becomes discouraged in the witness of faith.

But in the latter case faith must be activated in a special way. Nothing we do for the salvation of our neighbour is in vain! Every prayer, every effort, every overcoming of discouragement or despair in relation to those for whom we intercede before God... Parents who fight for their children who are going in the wrong direction; and nowadays it is sometimes necessary to mention also children and young people who have to see how their parents are going in the wrong direction...

In the Kingdom of God, nothing that is done out of love happens in vain. And when we see no more ways, let us entrust the situation to the Mother of God. She knows ways that we do not see, to reach the hearts of men.

Let us never let ourselves be carried away by discouragement, which must be fought even as a demonic temptation!

Let us not allow ourselves to be misled either if the impetus for evangelisation in the Church is waning, if dialogue serves more for mediation between nations than for

mission, if ecumenical efforts are not based on the full truth and there is a risk of relativising that word of the Lord: *"I am the way, the truth and the life"*.

We are committed to the Lord's mission! He is our orientation! And if one day we are fortunate enough to reach the eternal dwelling place, may He be able to say to us: "Come into the Father's house" (cf. Mt 25:34).

And if the Lord comes back sooner, may He find us working in His vineyard! That will please Him!