



18. June 2023

Reconciliation in Christ

Rom 5:6-11

When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for the godless. You could hardly find anyone ready to die even for someone upright; though it is just possible that, for a really good person, someone might undertake to die. So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. How much more can we be sure, therefore, that, now that we have been justified by his death, we shall be saved through him from the retribution of God. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more can we be sure that, being now reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. What is more, we are filled with exultant trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

We are already redeemed, if only we accept the gift of reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

Today we look particularly at the love of our Redeemer, highlighting St. Paul's statement that the Lord gave His life for us when we were still far from God and were weak and sinful. God wants to overcome our enmity through His love. From the outside, the Crucified One was seen as an enemy of humankind, who had to die for His own guilt. But in reality He bore the sins of mankind and justified by His blood those who would accept the gift of salvation.

Thus it is clear to us why, being in the Lord's school, we must learn to love sinners, pray for enemies and always be ready to forgive. Every person has the possibility of conversion until the hour of the death. In the last breath one can still repent and call on the name of the Lord. God's love for His creatures and His desire to raise them to be His children is so great that He follows them to their last depths. If the Spirit of God fills us, it will be He Himself in us who seeks the sinner to be saved through the death of Christ.

Let us reflect for a moment on what it means for a person to be damned, for hell is a reality. Besides being a dogma of our Catholic faith, there have been people, like the children of Fatima, who had visions in which they saw the horrors of hell. It is a great levity and imprudence to pretend to rely on God's mercy to claim that hell does not exist or that it is practically empty. Hell, as a place of damnation and eternal separation

from God, is such a dreadful mystery that it motivated the children of Fatima to pray and sacrifice tirelessly for sinners.

It is important for all of us to be aware of this terrible reality, to live with vigilance and to be ready to intercede for others, especially for those who seem to be far from God. The Lord's love is steadfast and loyal; but it is we who can stray from the path and get lost.

On the other hand, through faith we can put our trust in God's love. That is why today's reading praises God's history of salvation in Jesus Christ. In a way, we can say that it is difficult to be condemned, if we consider the infinite love of God, who uses every possibility to lead us to His Kingdom. This certainty increases our confidence. That is why it is so important that we hold on to His love and that we make use of all the help that God offers us through His Church for this arduous journey towards eternity.

There needs to be a healthy balance in the proclamation of the gospel. The sinfulness of humans should not be unilaterally emphasised, but neither should we fall into that modern tendency which suggests that God's mercy practically overlooks sin and that there is no need for conversion. This would be a dramatic misunderstanding! God always calls us to conversion. For this, it is also necessary that we know and perceive the abyss of sin with its terrible consequences. Against this background, the true mercy of God, who in Christ triumphed over judgement, shines even more brightly. Thus we can listen with joy to the last words of today's biblical text: *"we are filled with exultant trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation."*