

10. August 2023

Feast of St. Lawrence  
Giving without calculating

2 Cor 9:6-10

*He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings. Every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound in you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work, as it is written: He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor: his justice remaineth for ever. And he that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice.*

Generosity is part of God's Being. We are not only to give generously, but also with a cheerful heart, that is, willingly and with joy.

With such an exhortation, we can look deeply into the Heart of God. In fact, the Lord wants us to become like Him. For this, it is necessary to overcome that heart of ours, which is often so small and narrow. With every gesture of giving, even if it is sometimes at the cost of denying ourselves, we open the door to God's grace, which manifests itself to us in overabundance. God is not only generous; He is generosity itself. This means that His Being is to give in abundance, to bestow His love in abundance; moreover, in overabundance.

Today's biblical text does not only refer to the sharing of material goods, which is easier for us to understand. But the exhortation goes much further than that; although it also involves the material, for if we are not able to share at this level, we will hardly be willing to share generously in spiritual goods.

It is a matter of the heart and therefore a matter of love... True love helps us to grow beyond ourselves. Think, for example, of the love of a good mother, who is willing to do everything for her child. She will not be calculating and pointing out all the time what she has done for it, but simply does it out of love for the child.

This love has been deeply infused by God into the nature of women, so it is all the more disconcerting that a mentality is proliferating in which what is „natural“ ceases to be natural. However, when love becomes supernatural, it goes far beyond this natural love.

Yes, in this new dimension the heart opens up to the whole of humanity. When we see people with God's eyes, when His goodness and generosity fill our hearts more and more, then we will not only be concerned about people's material needs, but even more about their spiritual needs. Concern for the salvation of men was St. Paul's impulse; while, at the same time, he cared diligently for the poor in Jerusalem, organising collections (1 Cor 16:1-4). Both elements go hand in hand! In fact, this is how God Himself acts.

But if we notice that the Church would begin to concern itself more with people's material welfare than with their eternal salvation, then we must become thoughtful and cautious. The disciples were not sent in the first instance to bring men material bread or to assist them in social matters, but their generosity consisted in giving their whole lives to the proclamation of the gospel. They sowed generously, and therefore also reaped generously.

What is decisive in this exhortation of the Apostle is the attitude of giving generously, with an eye to God and without calculation.

The Lord gives simply out of the love of His heart. We must learn this attitude, so that the love in our hearts increases and leads us to this attitude of giving.

Then we will give without calculating, we will pray for people without calculating, we will pass on the gospel without calculating, because the reward that awaits us is something else: growth in love and closeness to God.