

4. January 2024

## The works of justice

1 Jn 3:7-10

*Children, do not let anyone lead you astray. Whoever acts uprightly is upright, just as he is upright. Whoever lives sinfully belongs to the devil, since the devil has been a sinner from the beginning. This was the purpose of the appearing of the Son of God, to undo the work of the devil. No one who is a child of God sins because God's seed remains in him. Nor can he sin, because he is a child of God. This is what distinguishes the children of God from the children of the devil: whoever does not live uprightly and does not love his brother is not from God.*

The apostle's warnings and admonitions want to be heard well.

We will only be able to perceive the reality of life correctly if we recognise both the light and the dark! If we block out the dark, we become illusory and live in our imaginations. If we do not notice the light, our mind becomes dark and our soul dull. It needs the right balance. The Holy Scriptures are a very good example. They give the light and do not conceal the dangers of man, so that he can also take the right remedy.

We can be led astray. Therefore, with regard to our faith, it is important that we remain in the faith that has been handed down to us, which is a great gift from God. This includes rejecting that which can lead us astray. Once we have recognised it as misleading, we no longer need to concern ourselves with it, but turn to what is essential.

Today's texts are about justice to be done.

Universal justice provides that everyone should get what is due to them and there should be no taking advantage because of natural advantages and circumstances. Practising the virtues is always an active participation in shaping the good in this world and also in one's own soul. It shapes man and makes him increasingly incorruptible.

If we take to heart the principle of justice that everyone should receive what is due to him, then we as Christians are called to do not only those works of justice which

primarily concern the natural life, but also the supernatural life. It is therefore also a work of justice to pass on the Gospel and the values that come from it to people, because they concern his Eternal Salvation and they are due to him!

We can also extend the concept of justice to the Lord. In view of His goodness and what He has done for us, it is also just to respond to His love, to honour and love Him!

When we are busy with the works of righteousness in this way, the works of the devil are destroyed more and more. The more the light of God enters us and dispels all darkness, the less room there will be for the devil, the more we are zealous in the virtues, the more our soul is adorned by them and the devil finds it harder and harder to spread his darkness.

It is necessary to remain vigilant and always allow the Lord to purify our soul and strengthen us in good works.

The second part of the text needs some explanation. It is unfortunately not the case that we Christians no longer sin. What is meant here is probably the permanent sin and the persistence in this state. If it is a serious sin, committed with consciousness, then it is a mortal sin. However, this is not compatible with the presence of God in us and God's Spirit will constantly admonish us to change this situation and return to Him!

There still remains a distinguishing criterion between the children of light and the children of darkness: the pursuit of righteousness and brotherly love are an indicator of which spirit dwells in us and whether we are sincerely serving the Lord. They are also an examination for ourselves, whether we become careless in our ways or persevere. This self-examination is important, because we do not want to be led astray by others, nor do we want to lead others or ourselves astray!