

7. June 2024

## Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesu

Hos 11:1, 3-4, 8-9

*When Israel was a child I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt. I myself taught Ephraim to walk, I myself took them by the arm, but they did not know that I was the one caring for them, that I was leading them with human ties, with leading-strings of love, that, with them, I was like someone lifting an infant to his cheek, and that I bent down to feed him. Ephraim, how could I part with you? Israel, how could I give you up? How could I make you like Admah or treat you like Zeboiim? My heart within me is overwhelmed, fever grips my inmost being. I will not give rein to my fierce anger, I will not destroy Ephraim again, for I am God, not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I shall not come to you in anger.*

Already in the Old Covenant, as today in the Book of Hosea, God expresses His affection for us in human terms to make us understand how much He loves us! He chooses the most tender expressions to make us humans understand how much His heart is inclined towards us. While in the Song of Songs by Solomon, for example, we hear the language of love between bride and bridegroom, here it is more the voice of the Father who loves and courts His children, His people.

But the unfaithfulness violates this love, it does not respond to the love, there is no repentance that would make the people fully receptive to this love again. But the Lord does not turn away from His people, He cannot - out of love - abandon them:

*“My heart within me is overwhelmed, fever grips my inmost being.”* God cannot act against this love that He has promised to His people: *“I am God, not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I shall not come to you in anger”*.

The infinitely great happiness for us human beings is the love of God, and that God is as He is. He is not subject to the human limits of the ability to love, but He Himself is love and this love - if we want to express it in human terms - can always win and prevail!

Some people might now object: But there is hell! How can that be reconciled with the love of God? How can it be that a loving God lets one of his creatures suffer forever?

With such questions they might come to the conclusion that God cannot be love after all, or that hell cannot exist at all, or that it is empty, because in the end God wants to save everyone!

Evidently, false ideas have infiltrated this way of thinking. As we all know, love needs freedom, otherwise it is forced and therefore not true love. People can therefore consciously reject God's offer of love and close themselves off. If this happens with full knowledge, then one does not want love at all, and the will solidifies in the rejection of God. Thus the human being excludes himself from God's love, as it happened to the fallen angels, and this is already a kind of hell on earth.

Even more important than the fact of the existence of hell and the doctrines that flow from it, is to consider the love of God as it shines forth on today's feast day of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. God wanted us to understand that He loves us with all His heart and that His heart is always open for us!

Because of this love, God tries everything to reach man and make His love tangible to him. We know that Jesus' love went all the way to the cross, and in the Holy Spirit we have been given the Spirit of love and truth, who, in turn, wants us to understand this love.

In this sense, it could be said that, in view of this immense love of God, which surpasses all expectations, no man should be lost. But there remains the dimension of freedom, as I mentioned above, which in its conscious abuse and without repentance, eternally separates from God.

It is therefore all the more important that those who have recognised God's love - at least in its first glimpses - and live by it, pray and seek in various ways that others may also come to know this love. This is our duty of love towards other people and also our gratitude towards God, who seeks and loves His children so much!