

1. October 2022

## The good outcome

Job 42:1-3,5-6,12-16

*This was the answer Job gave to the Lord: "I know that you are all-powerful: what you conceive, you can perform. I was the man who misrepresented your intentions with my ignorant words. You have told me about great works that I cannot understand, about marvels which are beyond me, of which I know nothing. Before, I knew you only by hearsay but now, having seen you with my own eyes, I retract what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes." The Lord blessed Job's latter condition even more than his former one. He came to own fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she-donkeys. He had seven sons and three daughters; his first daughter he called 'Turtledove', the second 'Cassia' and the third 'Mascara'. Throughout the land there were no women as beautiful as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them inheritance rights like their brothers. After this, Job lived for another one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and his children's children to the fourth generation.*

Today we hear the good outcome of the many sufferings that Job had to endure. By the grace of God and having gone through all the painful processes of purification, Job gave the right answer to the Lord and overcame all resistance against Him. Job understood that his own reason was too limited for understanding the ways of God, and he recognized that he had spoken with meaningless words, tarnishing the divine designs. Through the path of suffering with all its trials, Job ended up knowing God more deeply, so that he could exclaim: "I knew you only by hearsay but now, I have seen you with my own eyes".

At the end of the process of purification, one arrives at a deeper knowledge of God and a more intimate and trusting relationship with Him. We could speak of a friendship with God, or even, in a certain way, of a "mystical espousal of the soul to God". This means that He has set aside everything that hindered unification with His Will. Let us remember that the great goal of our spiritual journey is the union of our will with that of God. We must learn to fulfill His Will willingly, totally and immediately, as do the holy angels.

All obstacles that stand in the way of this goal, the Lord wants to push aside: all foolishness and all resistance - even hidden - against Him. This resistance manifests itself not only in grave sins, but often in hidden pride, which takes pleasure in building its own values on our intellectual, spiritual or bodily qualities, whether real or supposed. All this must be set aside, so that divine love can be poured out undividedly in us!

The happy outcome of this book points out to us something very important: all the processes of purification are in no way a punishment from God, as we tend to interpret them and as the devil wants to make us see them in order to shake our trust in the Lord. On the contrary, the purifications have a wonderful goal: to awaken in the person a greater love for God and for humankind. Therefore, we must remember again and again that God, in his love, integrates into His plan of salvation for the transformation of our soul all the heavy crosses that come our way, however painful they may be and however much we may be frightened by them...

St. Teresa of Avila, a great teacher of the interior path, once said, "If people knew what graces await them, they would not be so afraid of purifications." The same is implied by the end of today's biblical text: after his transformation, Job was able to experience God's mercy more than ever.

And, indeed, it is so: the processes of purification are a means that the Lord uses to increase love in us. They are moved by the same love that created us and redeemed us, and they are one of the tools of the Holy Spirit, who wants everything in us to be touched by the love of God. That is why we must consider it a grace when the Lord purifies the soul; a process that is part of the whole serious following of Christ.

Therefore, we must try to overcome any fear of such a purification processes in our spiritual life. Rather, we must place our trust in God as we are called to try day after day to face difficult situations in the Spirit of the Lord. They may seem dark hours for our soul; but in reality God is at work in depth, making His light shine more brightly. And then this light of His permeates and purifies our natural light, the understanding, which is still burdened with errors and foolishness. Thus, the divine light shines brighter and love grows.

After each cross we have carried, we will be grateful to the Lord for it, because, after all, He has done everything well, and perhaps through this cross we have been able to collaborate in the plan of salvation, not only for our benefit, but also for the benefit of others.