

The Texts of the Convivium

THE HUGE ROPED PARTY OF SOULS CLIMBING UP TO INFINITE HEAVENS

“Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness” (John 8,12) says the Lord. These are words of Christ that urge us to imitate his life and his conduct, if we truly want to be enlightened and freed of any inner blindness. Thus, our biggest concern should be to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ”. Now “those who wish to fully understand and appreciate the words of Christ must ensure that his life is shaped after Christ’s life.

These are the expressions with which “The Imitation of Christ” begins. More generally they confirm to what extent anyone’s thinking and soul, their inner state of mind affect his actions.

What is essential here is to live in Christ identifying in him, living his states of mind as if they were ours.

Acquiring a sense of Christ is possible through inner growth.

It is by developing a sense of Christ that one can gradually shed light on its implications. These implications are not purely logical, but they also go in the direction of a closer examination of an inner sensitivity.

Who is, for us, Jesus Christ? He is certainly a man in all his fullness and with all the limits of his humanity. But in theological terms based on the Holy Scriptures one can say that he is a supernatural being.

Jesus comes from the Father, not just as a mere creature, but inasmuch as he proceeds from Him in a more metaphysical sense – as it were. He comes from a more intimate realm of the paternal Essence. This is why the Creed refers to him as “generated, not created”, “God from God”, “True God from true God”, of the same substance (or essence) as the Father”...

Coming out from the Father, the Son continues to be in close unity with Him. He is in the Father, just as the Father is in Jesus. This implies that every word or announcement or command from Jesus is a word or announcement or command he receives from the Father (John 12, 49-50).

It is a discourse which does not rule us out as human creatures. Formed in His image humans are called upon to cooperate with the divine work– especially his disciples (John, 15,16).

Jesus addresses another prayer to God: He should do so that all of the disciples may be one among them and with their divine Master, just as the Son and the Father are one (John, 17, 11-23).

It is this union with Jesus that allows the disciples to do miraculous deeds, which will prove to be even more miraculous later, when Jesus, risen to Heaven, will be next to the Father seated on his right hand (John, 14, 11-14).

This will allow the Lord, the divine Word, to acquire higher wisdom and power and will also allow the disciples to express themselves and act at an even more sublime level.

Just as the Father lives in his Christ (John 14,10) so those who receive the Christ receive the Father who sent Him (John, 12,44).

And just as the Father lives in his Son, the latter lives in the Father (John 14,11). The word of the Son, through the son himself, comes from the Father (John, 14,10).

This is what happens especially since the Lord, the Son has taken his seat next to the Father on the divine throne.

The Son, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, grows in the Father. It is growth that reaches out for an infinite target. This growth opens up in the direction of full divinity. And this is how we humans are willing to grow infinitely in Christ, that is to say in God.

We are heirs to God, therefore co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8, 16-17).

With God, with Christ and his saints all together we form a huge roped party, united in its intent to infinitely rise towards ever higher heavens.

The rising of this party happens by grace, by divine initiative. And human beings must invoke it and cooperate with it.

Prayer, which must be hopeful, is essential, but in itself is not all: it must be supplemented by ascesis.

As to prayer, we ought to recall as a model the one the Lord taught us (Matthew 6, 5-15) and the faith that should always go with it (Mark 5, 34). Jesus was constantly absorbed in prayer, to which he devoted hours and days in solitude.

Prayers should be recited not ostentatiously but insistently.

In addition to prayer, what is also important is fasting, which the divine Master often practiced for days and weeks. Referring to demons that the apostles did not succeed in driving away, Jesus said that these negative entities could be sent away only by combining prayer with fasting (Mc. 9, 28-29).

Here is where ascesis starts to be practiced: "What did you go into the desert to see? A reed swaying in the wind? A man dressed in fine clothes" From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force (Luke 7, Matthew 11 etc.).

The need for ascesis, for some violence to be exerted on tangible nature is acknowledged throughout the whole of the Christian tradition and religious tradition in general.

"Abide in my love" is Jesus' exhortation to his disciples, who are urged to love one another. He wants his joy to be in them and to be perfect (John 15, 8-11).

The divine Father loves each being, each expression of truth, beauty, goodness, evolution, value, humanism. He improves everything, he wants everything to be perfect.

Creation is work in progress, which tends to full realization, to perfection and unlimited happiness that never wanes.