



60th Year November 25, 2012 Pamphlet # 48 (3104)

THE OBTAINING OF ETERNAL LIFE

The noble youth

The young ruler of today's Gospel passage approached the Lord with pure motives. He asked Him what to do, in order to inherit eternal life. The teacher of the law had previously made the same question to the Lord who said the parable of the Good Samaritan. However the teacher of the law was hiding guile in his question, whereas today's youth was sincerely interested in his salvation. And in precisely this he was distinguished from the many. Because most people addressed Jesus, in order for Him to heal them of some illness of body, whereas he was concerned about what is higher than everything, to obtain eternal life. He was rich, but not atheist and materially-minded, like the foolish rich man of the related parable. He believed in the true God and from his childhood he was diligently struggling to keep His commandments.

Correct faith and life

The Lord seeing the youth's pure dispositions, indicated to him two basic presuppositions, in order to enter into eternal life. These are correct faith and life which agrees with the commandments of God. For this reason initially, Christ strove to correct the mistaken viewpoint of the youth towards Him. The youth considered Him a good teacher. The Lord stressing to him that the meaning of goodness befits God alone, led him in an indirect and very pedagogical manner to the understanding of His divine quality.

Subsequently training him in the spiritual life, He first reminded him of the 10 Commandments: the "you shall not murder", "you shall not commit adultery" and the rest. Since the youth answered Him that from a young age he is striving to keep these commandments, the Lord wanted to initiate him into the essence and purpose of the commandments of God, which is none other than the complete love for the true God and love for neighbor. So He called him to sell his belongings, to distribute them to the poor and to follow Him.

Giving away his wealth to the poor the youth, would practically be keeping the commandment “you shall love your neighbor as yourself”. Also abandoning everything for the sake of Christ and following Him, he would be implementing the complete love for God with one’s whole soul. Thus he would be perfected in faith and life, and through the infallible path of love he would enter into the Kingdom of God.

The meaning the life and of human existence

With the words which the Lord addressed to the rich youth, He showed where the meaning of our life lies: it lies initially in God who created us and made everything in order to save us, and then in our fellow men. Our wealth which remains intact in heaven, in other words in eternity, is our God and all the other people. Through love we are called to grab the opportunity of the present life, in order to fill our existence with our God and to fit all people within us. Egotism and our binding with the things of the world, whether they are called money, or homes, or whatsoever else, is a great foolishness and a missing of the mark, in other words, sin, which leaves us completely empty – hollow forever.

At this point the following observation is necessary. That which is preeminent in the saying of the Lord is the “follow me”. This means that a person cannot truly love, if he is not following God in everything. It means furthermore that in correct faith in the person of Christ, as Godman, and in the keeping of His Commandments lies the key of eternal life. If we don’t believe that Jesus is the incarnate God and if we don’t remain faithful to His word, we will die bound in our sins (see Jn. 8:24).

Based on the above, we could somewhat give the definition of the genuine and whole person, thus as God made him. Man is the rational creature of God, who was made in the image of God, so that always following the will of his creator, he could bear within him eternally, true love, God, all of humanity and the whole world. When, however, he is given over to his thoughts and his wills and is bound with specific temporal persons, things or occupations, then he loses his wholeness. He is perverted, he departs from the meaning of life and of his existence and hands himself to eternal death and misfortune.

This is precisely what the rich youth suffered. He, of course, desired to live eternally. However because his heart was given more to his earthly riches, in the end, he did not accept to follow the saying of the Lord, so as to progress in love and to enter into eternal life.

We, I wonder, how do we place ourselves before this burning topic, which is related to our self definition in eternity?

Archim. P. K.