



PRAYER

Fraternity as a contribution on care for our common home

Gospel according to John (15, 1-8)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit.

You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.

Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

4 Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

COMMENT

In our countries where wine production abounds and the landscape is occupied by the nuances of the vineyards, it is said that when the vine is pruned it "weeps", because in the blending it releases a liquid, which makes one think of a small tear. The evangelical image of the vine and the branches is well understood: the true farmer does not let the vine become too luxuriant, but prunes it, because it bears more fruit. Every type of cutting, pruning, at the moment it hurts, it seems to take away something fundamental from us. Yet human life is generated and multiplied in this way: not occupying the whole scene, but making space for the other, learning not to be only children, but brothers.

Too many times, even as Christians, we have thought of occupying the whole scene of history, in an intrusive way. Now we are realizing that this style leads nowhere: it is like a plant that gets bigger, without ever being pruned, and that in the end remains sterile and alone.

The world will find its lifeblood, its humanity, if we learn at all levels to renounce omnipotence, to have everything, to plunder nature and things, to give us back our limits instead. At the moment it will seem like we are losing something; it will be similar to crying, but in the end we will build a style of fraternity that will allow us to become branches full of fruit and not sterile branches that feel at the center of the world, but that in reality are no longer useful.

To seek and recognize the diversity and richness of each branch, making space for the other, is true ecology, which makes the world habitable in spite of everything. For us and for those who will come after us!

LS n. 70

In the story of Cain and Abel, we see how envy led Cain to commit the ultimate injustice against his brother, which in turn ruptured the relationship between Cain and God, and between Cain and the earth from which he was banished. This is seen clearly in the dramatic exchange between God and Cain. God asks: "Where is Abel your brother?" Cain answers that he does not know, and God persists: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground" (Gen 4:9-11). Disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbour, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth. When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered. We see this in the story of Noah, where God threatens to do away with humanity because of its constant failure to fulfil the requirements of justice and peace: "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them" (Gen 6:13). These ancient stories, full of symbolism, bear witness to a conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.