GOD'S PATIENCE WITH EVIL

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Beloved in the Lord Jesus, how surprising, even scandalous perhaps, is the image of the sower who allows the wheat and the cockle to grow together. Like his servants, we too are convinced that it would be better to pull up the weeds, and then what is good could grow and develop better. And these same doubts arise more than once in our own thoughts, when we ask ourselves whether it would not be better if so much evil were not happening in the world. Whether it would not be better if there were no wicked people around us.

Surely hundreds, thousands of times we have wondered where evil in the world actually came from. In the Book of Genesis we read: "God saw that all He had made was very good." For it is obvious that nothing other than good itself could have come from the hands of God. God is the highest good, and what He created is good, very good, as we read in Holy Scripture. How, then, did it come about that evil appeared in God's field, which is mankind? We find the answer in today's Gospel. The Saviour Himself teaches us: "While men were asleep, the enemy came and sowed cockle among the wheat." Who is this enemy? We know well. He is the great enemy of God and of man, the devil. The devil, who unceasingly tries to lead us onto the wrong path, who unceasingly sows weeds in the field of our hearts and minds.

WHAT EVIL IS

My dear ones, but have we ever stopped to consider what evil actually is? Evil, my dear ones, as such does not exist. Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers of the Church say that evil is *privatio boni*, the absence of good. Evil in itself does not exist; it has no being of its own. Evil appears where good is lacking. The enemy, who is the devil, is responsible for this lack of good. But this lack can be of two kinds.

First, it may be a consequence of original sin. Remember: Adam and Eve in Paradise did not fall ill. Sickness, which is an evil, appeared as a consequence of original sin. Sickness is an evil. Why? Because it is a lack of health. Sickness means the absence of health, a disturbance of that order which, by God's will, ought to reign in our human organism. So there is evil which does not depend on man, which came into the world as a consequence of original sin — but we know perfectly well that original sin was the fruit of the devil's action. It is the devil who comes, who tempts Eve, the devil who leads man toward sin. He is the father of all evil, of all sin.

There is, my dear ones, a second kind of evil: moral evil. Moral evil, which results from our human choices, bad choices, for which we bear responsibility. Evil which comes from the fact that man rejects the will of God, rejects the divine order and sets his own will above the will of God. Our free will, which we received from the Creator, is a great blessing and a curse. For each of us can choose what is good, and in this way can attain the reward of eternal life in heaven; but every man endowed with free will can also choose what is evil, what is contrary to God's will, what brings into our life chaos, demonic, satanic chaos, which leads to eternal damnation in hell.

Beloved in Christ the Lord, since we realise what evil is, since we realise that evil is a lack of good which a given being ought to have according to its nature, since we realise that there are two kinds of evil, since we realise that there is moral evil, which is the fruit of our bad, mistaken decisions, the fruit of man's rebellion against the Lord God, which is nothing other than a repetition of the rebellion of the devil himself, of Lucifer himself, who cried out: "I will not serve," and every human sin is a repetition of that satanic, Luciferian cry "I will not serve" — then we may ask ourselves another question.

PATIENCE WITH THE COCKLE

Why does the Lord God, seeing the cockle beside the wheat, not react? For like the servants in the Gospel, we expect God to pull up the cockle, to remove it. Here we hear astonishing words: "Allow both to grow until the harvest." What does this mean? It is, my dear ones, nothing other than a testimony to

God's patience with man. The Lord God allows the cockle to grow together with the wheat, not in order to accustom us to evil, not in order to pretend that it is not there. He allows the good to grow, as well as the wicked, so that we, my dear ones, in gathering up the weeds, do not uproot the wheat along with them. That is, so as not to wrong the one whom we may today regard as cockle, as a weed, and who may be transformed into the finest wheat.

For God's grace works unfathomable things in human souls. And the Lord God knows perfectly well that what today is cockle in God's eyes, a weed, worth nothing, can become a true treasure. And the history of the Church provides us with a whole series of examples which confirm how patient the Lord God is, how He waits for our conversion, how He helps us through His grace in our transformation. As we hear in Holy Scripture: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Remember, for instance, Saul, the fierce persecutor of the first Christians, who took part in the stoning of Saint Stephen, and who became Saint Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, who exhorts us in today's Epistle: "Bear with one another and forgive one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you."

Dear faithful, the Redeemer gives all of us time for repentance, for conversion. The Redeemer gives us His grace, which has the power to transform us. But it depends on us, on men, whether we make use of this time and the grace given to us by the Lord God. Whether we take up the fight against evil — that is, in other words, the effort to preserve and increase good in our lives, in the lives of our families, in the life of our nation, in the life of the whole world.

THE EVIL SPIRIT'S FRUITS

We see today, my dear ones, the terrifying fruits of the action of the evil spirit. We see, my dear ones, the terrifying consequences of men's departing, of their turning their backs on the Lord God and giving themselves into slavery to the devil. And I am thinking here not only of the hosts of atheists, the open enemies of the Lord God, not only of those who still wander in the darkness of paganism or Islam, not only of those who committed deicide, rejected the Messiah and today await the coming of their own Messiah, who will be the Antichrist. Not only of the so many heretics and schismatics, but also of the whole mass of modernist would-be Catholics, who do exactly what the devil planned. Who take part in the dethronement of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who are building a satanic new world order, which carries within it one great chaos.

My beloved, let us give thanks today with all our heart to the Lord Jesus for His patience with us. For the fact that before the day of harvest came, the day of our death, we were converted, we came to know the Catholic faith, we resolved to come to know the Lord God every day better, to love Him more ardently, and to serve Him more faithfully. This is the purpose of our existence; this is why we were called to life by the Creator. And we must, my dear ones, pray for all those who go astray today. Who have been deceived by the devil.

We must admonish sinners, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful well, comfort the sorrowful. We must, my dear ones, become, after the example of Saint Paul, apostles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, instruments of God's grace for our neighbours, so very blinded today. If God was patient with you, then show patience to another man. If God, through His grace, lifted you up from the falls in which you lay, then when you see a man who has fallen, stretch out your hand to him, and do not trample him into the ground. Let us fulfil, my dear ones, the duties of our state in life zealously. Let us not look around at the cockle surrounding us. The Lord God permits this cockle to be. He still gives, all the while, a chance for conversion. Let us be, my dear ones, faithful to the Lord Jesus. Let us not waste the time and the grace which the Lord God gives us. For none of us knows how much more time and grace we shall receive here on earth from the Lord God.

THE DAY OF HARVEST

One thing is certain: with every second of our life we draw nearer to the day of harvest. To the day of our death. And the Catholic life ought to prepare us for that hour, for the day of harvest. For on that day, in

that moment in which our earthly warfare ends, our eternity will be decided. Either we shall die as Catholics in sanctifying grace and save our souls, or we shall die as non-Catholics, or as Catholics but in mortal sin, and damn our souls for ever. May we, my dear ones, on the day of harvest prove to be excellent wheat, good wheat, and deserve to find our way into the heavenly granary.

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.

(*The faithful:* Forever and ever. Amen.)