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The Gospel



according to me

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Quotations from Saint Matthew's Gospel as well as quotations from the other parts of the Bible are printed in italics.

The reflections concerning just myself and the starting point are written in bold.

The book originally came into existence as an evening meditation, as a way of organising my own thoughts, as a dialogue with my own conscience.

I always write with Capital words denoting God.

Starting point:

Arguments based on reason and the experience of mankind lead to the assumption that besides the material world that we live in, the existence of a unique, quite simple and unchangeable spiritual substance is also highly probable. That Substance is Someone objectively and in substance different from matter; by Himself and from Himself the happiest and indescribably above anything that is or may be, except by Himself, captured by the human mind. He have created material for Big Bang and consciousness. He is infinite in reason, will and every perfection. Almighty, prodigious, everlasting, unknowable within the potential of human IQ.

God.

Dedicated to my wife. I realize more and more what she means to me.

I thank the Jesuit priest Janko Ďurica, SJ, of Hriňová, for the example of a beautiful life full of science and faith.

I thank the website www.catholic.org for text of the Gospel of Mathew.

Dear reader,

Let us read together a part of a book which is said to be the most frequently printed and read in the world. You may know, but you may even have no idea that this book is the Bible. I started with the Gospel of Saint Matthew.

Why precisely did I start with that one?

The official list of books of the New Testament starts precisely with that one. Were there to be no New Testament the preceding part of the Bible could as a whole be considered as something unfinished, without a happy ending, or possibly somehow similar to ancient Egyptian, Indian or Chinese literature. There would be no point in it. Some people would still be waiting for the promises written thousands of years ago to come true. Orthodox Jews could serve as an example. But the New Testament shows the part of the Bible - dating back to the period before Christ - in a completely different light.

Judge for yourself.

Even though the beginning of Gospel of Matthew looks boring, it still forms a part of the whole.

I. The Birth and Childhood of Jesus Christ 1,1

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

¹Roll of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

²Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, ³Judah fathered Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, ⁴Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ⁵Salmon fathered Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse; ⁶and Jesse fathered King David. David fathered Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, ⁷Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, Abijah fathered Asa, ⁸Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, Joram fathered Uzziah, ⁹Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, Ahaz fathered Hezekiah, ¹⁰Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, Amon fathered Josiah; ¹¹and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers. Then the deportation to Babylon took place. ¹²After the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel,

Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel, ¹³Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, Eliakim fathered Azor, ¹⁴Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, Achim fathered Eliud, ¹⁵Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob; ¹⁶and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

¹⁷The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the Babylonian deportation to Christ.

This is how the biography of each of us might begin. If we wished and if it was technically so simple, even we, nearly every one of us (at least in the civilized part of the world where priests dutifully keep archives of the baptized which have not so far been destroyed by fire, floods, war or the crazy decision of a revolutionary or of a dim-witted priest), we could prepare our pedigrees. Who knows how many of us would find out about how important their ancestors were or how many of the powerful would find out about how unimportant their ancestors were.

The pedigrees of this kind are not uncommon. If you travel to countries with lower living standards, which, however, offer more peace among common people (such as certain nations of Africa), you will find living chronicles there - old people who will gladly narrate the history of their pedigree dating back several centuries ago. These are people with exceptional memories that they train sitting around the campfire, listening to those with knowledge from their ancestors and repeating them.

The major part of that pedigree consists of kings. Israeli and Jewish kings. Although many of them were very strong personalities, many were weaklings. The third part of the family tree lists the names that show David's progeny from glory to complete forgetfulness. Some of the last fourteen names do not appear anywhere else in the Bible. From the greatest glory to utter insignificance. Yet, despite this insignificance, they were still directed toward a strange Person to which the whole Bible is actually heading.

That is why the following sentences of Matthew's Gospel are beyond any natural criteria.

¹⁸*This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being an righteous man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. ²⁰He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.'* ²²*Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: ²³Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

²⁴*When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home; ²⁵he had not had intercourse with her when she gave birth to a son; and he named him Jesus.*

Mary was expecting a baby. No one knew who begat that baby. Matthew writes that the baby was conceived of the Holy Spirit. According to Matthew, Joseph was not the father of Jesus. He therefore suggested a secret break-up to Mary.

I have always found the expression “*to divorce informally*” astounding. What does that really mean?

It was necessary to spend an evening (in 1992) reading that Gospel, holding a pen and to start reflecting. “*To divorce informally*” may mean release in an unofficial way, thus without any documents, without publication and scandal or as the ancient Jews put it, without a release letter and cause. It may have perhaps occurred to Joseph to come to terms with Mary and let her live her life so that people find out as late as possible that Joseph and Mary do not even have a sexual life or live together in common household. He wanted to cancel all obligations and to release her from the promises accepted by Mary in the nuptial contract that were, due to her obvious delicate condition (that Joseph learnt about directly from her), violated.

According to Matthew there is an angel visiting Joseph in a dream to confirm Mary’s confession.

Joseph’s gesture looks congenial. As he wants to cause no problems to Mary he is **righteous** (the word **righteous** is in bold as my personal relation to that quality is very specific) in such a deeply humane and, for that time, quite unusual way. According to

the Jewish law a woman might have been stoned for infidelity. Adulteresses are still stoned in certain Islamic countries.

Even before the arrival of the angel and without humiliating Mary by publishing her “infidelity”, he tries secretly to come to terms with Mary and to release her of her obligations. As her *fiancé* and according to the Jewish law nearly her legitimate spouse he was entitled to have her stoned. He might doubt Mary claiming that an angel had visited her and since then she was expecting a baby without human interference; as the Evangelist says “*through the Holy Spirit*”.

Let us imagine Joseph’s response:

“Mary, if you love someone else, that is your business. Before we got engaged you told me that you had never had a man and did not even want to know any, that you had consecrated your virginity to God. I married you with the promise that you have made, thinking: how nice. I do not feel like getting married, but as my parents force me to, I will get married then, but Mary will not ask me for sex. And we will both be content. But you are expecting a baby! What’s to be done?”

There is a hypothesis (among Protestants and Orthodoxes) according to which Joseph could have been a widower looking not for a wife, but rather for a mother of the children from his first marriage.

It is true that the facts are not as depicted by Matthew. The gospel only states that he had no sex with her until the baby was born. I do not, however, hold the view of Joseph as a widower. Please find Joseph’s reflection mentioned above as author’s licence. It may even be considered as a contextual reading, a reading between the lines, a reading based on the knowledge of the then way of of life and thinking of the ancient Jews. The context may result in the anticipation that Joseph may have decided to live in celibacy. He was made for it. He was **righteous**.

And it is not only a reading between the lines. There are strong historical arguments. I write about them in chapter 12, 46.

The main point of reference for the Catholic and Orthodox claim that Mary and Joseph lived without sex is the beginning of Luke's Gospel. Chapter 1, sentences 26 to 35, describes a special situation. Luke writes about the angel's message to Mary, who, according to the evangelist, has already been betrothed to Joseph. The angel offered her a task from God - to give birth to the Messiah-awaited Jews. She, though betrothed - which logically means she should live sexually with her husband after marriage - is completely strange: “*How does this happen, for I do not know a man?*” (Lk 1:34). If a woman - determined to marry - asks how she can be conceived without sex, what does that mean? It gives the only possible and logical answer. She doesn't plan sex in marriage! And Joseph had to know about this decision to live without sex. On engagement he accepted this decision.

Joseph made a truly heroic gesture. But history has forgotten his gift of giving Mary by accepting her decision for celibacy. Until now. Today's Christianity is beginning to appreciate Joseph's life alongside Jesus. Joseph also got into the Rosary prayer to Mary, to which he belonged from the beginning.

(The Bible is seemingly laconic in its use of certain words, but experts on Aramaic or Greek know that when the word “righteous “is used in the Bible referring to a person”, the word then means an exceptionally high moral assessment of that person.)

When Joseph learns about her delicate condition, he suggests to Mary to leave for a secluded place, to give birth silently the baby and raise the baby, promising to support the baby and to never disgrace her. He suggests that they may still remain spouses in public. Mary trusts God and waits. God sends the angel who confirms to Joseph, the **righteous**, the right man, that Mary does not lie, that God wants him to be the father of Jesus in public.

It is logical that the man, being **righteous**, in command of himself and not chasing after sex (which must definitely have been simpler in the past), moreover after meeting the messenger of God personally (even if only in a dream) sees Mary as an extraordinary being who could not then be perceived as a lover. If he did not want her as a lover before “the dream”, much less will he be courageous enough to ask Mary for sex after that strange dream.

Following “the dream” he sees her as a woman entrusted to him by God to be her spouse in public and to replace Him as father to Jesus. Once again I recommend also Chapter 12, 46.

The reflection is on the whole confirmed by some knowledge of the life of the ancient Jews.

1. In Jewish society the position of an engaged couple was practically a contractual relationship of married spouses lasting approximately for a year with the woman and the man still staying with their parents. It was not possible simply and easily to cancel that relationship. Having found out that Mary was pregnant Joseph therefore needed to deal with the legal resolution of his relationship with her.

2. In the past obedience towards parents played an unimaginably important role, especially to us Europeans who grew up in boundless liberty without respect for authority. Parents chose a bride for their son and the young couple could not oppose the choice. There is no need to doubt the fact that it was mainly wealth that played a role in selection of a life partner. It is therefore highly probable that Joseph and Mary were selected by their relatives, even though they did not want to marry. Parents made the decision and that was that.

Contacts with supernatural beings in a dream were mentioned twice in this chapter. Matthew mentions several more interventions of that kind. It is interesting that the participants in the Gospel believe that the dreams just like these were not just dreams, but reality. The contacts of the kind take place in reality, not in dreams, in Luke's Gospel. Matthew does not even want to turn the events described into miracles, but other texts show that the contrast between the Gospels does not rebut the authenticity of the Gospels.

Chapter 2

2,1

The Biblical Magi

¹After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, suddenly some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east ²asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' ³When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. ⁴He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.'

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared ⁸and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, 'Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.'

⁹Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. ¹⁰The sight of the star filled them with delight, ¹¹and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

The three magi, (the three is derived from the number of donations) wise men, were the people whose observation of nature resulted in finding that something unusual took place in their period of time. It was not just an unusual grouping of planets. What was unusual was their understanding that the star is that of the new Jewish king. It is obvious that they must have had very good knowledge of the teachings of the Jews. They saw more behind nature that they explored; they anticipated that there was God and some of their anticipations were also confirmed by the Jewish faith itself. They acquired Biblical books, but failed to grasp all of the prophecies. Once in the capital they therefore asked what to do next. Experts of the Old Testament were able to say where the Messiah was to be born according to the Bible. *At Bethlehem ... this is what the prophet wrote.* It was Micah the prophet living several centuries before the Christ.

Herod has a fantastic opportunity to personally talk to the wise men. He was asking them about how the star appeared. The powerful of this world always have an opportunity to hear the news, new ideas, new thoughts first. The powerful of this world then decide on their use, on how their authors will be treated. Common people in most cases do not assume at all what is going on in the background, even though the common people are also entitled to be familiar with the new things. And the powerful of this world often make use of their opportunity to learn of the news and the things first in a horrifying manner. So did Herod.

I should also be asking the wise men constantly about anything connected with the arrival of the new king to the Earth. About anything that they could say about him. About how they received the knowledge. And their knowledge was very profound, their faith was not after all shaken by the facts found. A common, helpless baby, not even two years old. Poor parents. Despite that they still believed – they fell on their knees before him and were bowing down to him.

The picture - educated people bowing down to a little poor baby - is a symbol of a profound thought.

What we believe is what we bow down to. Everybody does. **So do I!**

I believe my concept of righteousness, I bow down to my concept of righteousness and quite insanelly flare up when I feel that my concept of righteousness is not understood. Today I flared up twice, I twice bowed down to my concept of righteousness, not to God!

The Flight into Egypt and the Massacre of the Innocents 2,13

¹³After they had left, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.'
¹⁴So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I called my son out of Egypt.

Joseph received a warning “in a dream”, to flee with the baby to Egypt.

He could say to himself: “Why should I wander abroad as an exile just because of the baby? Who in fact knows about his divine origin? And besides, let us sleep, it is better to sleep on it.”

But Joseph, even though his life is not at stake, renders his son and his mother a service of love.

Unlike Joseph I say to myself “And why should I serve my children and family?” I prefer my own interests. There is no love in me. There is just a resentful feeling of injustice as I was not returned everything that I lent. There is just one remedy. No calculation. Learning to practise love shown by God. And if God seems to be distant, imitating the righteous Joseph.

Once Joseph received the warning, he got up and acted as if there was not a moment to lose.

2,16

¹⁶Herod was furious on realising that he had been fooled by the wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male children killed who were two years old or less, reckoning by the date he had been careful to ask the wise men. ¹⁷Then were fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸A voice is heard in Ramah, lamenting and weeping bitterly: it is Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they are no more.

Although Herod asked the magi to return and tell everything about the baby, God dissuaded them from doing so. It is possible to say that they are encouraged to lie to Herod. They then deceive Herod, do not come back and thus save the baby's life.

Would even God help by inducing people not to keep their promises? Well, that is the way it is. But it is necessary to be careful! Keeping the promise would in the case in hand mean involvement in a crime - put unfashionably, in a sin. If they returned and told everything to Herod, they would become accomplices in murder of the little baby. As they provided no information to Herod, more children perished, but the wise men are not to blame.

There is, however, a question. - "Why did and does God allow the suffering of the innocent?"

There may be no reply to that question in this world. Even though a reply to that question may be formulated, under real circumstances the meaning of the answer is not even accepted by a person with a considerable level of theological knowledge and experience.

The theory of relativity may not be understood without a deep knowledge of physics and mathematics. The purpose of suffering may not be understood without a deep knowledge of theology. There is a substantial difference between the theory of relativity and the issue of the purpose of suffering. Understanding the theory of relativity just requires human reason. To manage the issue of suffering of someone else or your own self also requires human will besides human reason. This is the fundamental starting-point of solving the issue of the purpose of suffering.

This book as a whole is also a search for a reply to the issue of suffering. I am convinced that having read the book many readers will be able to answer the question of purpose of suffering themselves. Even if they decide not to believe, they will definitely not ask believers the following question:

"Hey, listen, how can you explain that God, so good and righteous, allows so much suffering and unrighteousness in the world?"

So "Why did God allow the suffering of innocent children in Bethlehem?"

Do not be offended, but we are all to blame. Human nature is in fact corrupted. Or more precisely, "human nature does not work as well as it did when it was created."

Unlike Rousseau I insist that man is not good by nature. I do not want to say, however, that he is bad by nature. There are many good qualities, but there is also a restriction: the corrupted human nature (reason and will) – that is the instruments of the soul. The soul is what makes men different from the other living and inanimate

beings in the world. The soul will be mentioned later. Let us only state for now that the existence of soul is a fact. It is a fact that every anthropological science works with at present. I recommend d-factor theory. The theory that in every person, something sometimes manifest something dark - for example, the influence of hate social contributions and the subsequent incomprehensible behavior of man. He seems to have thrown away the supposed civilization level of a 21st-century European, and appears to be a barbarian capable of killing. For example, a migrant. Especially when he finds out through social networks that he is not so unique in his hatred.

(Certain scientists refuse the existence of the soul. They think that anything that makes a man himself, may be explained in terms of substance. Up to now they have not, however, come up with a single material proof to confirm a hint of the material origin of conscience of a man – I – at least. We may wait for them to discover something by chance anyway, but there is another option. Try it with Bible.)

The instruments of the soul are reason and will, then the ability to clearly, reasonably deliberate and to persistently want to do things reasonably – and matter is corrupted. Need a proof?

Just look around. How many of your schoolmates received the same education as you and yet they are more educated than you today. And how many of them are even worse off than you are. The same education as you, from the same teacher and yet they know less than you do.

Not to mention the will. I wish my will were as strong as I want! Just like some people who can fight for something and achieve that. And the same people cannot surprisingly make any progress in something else. This can, however, hardly give a true picture of how human nature is impaired. This is just an illustration.

Nature was not always corrupted. It was originally good. The deformation of human nature occurred in a certain period of human development. The Bible described the phenomenon using the language understood by the Hebrews some 3500 years ago. One can find the reference in the beginning of the first book of Moses Genesis, Chapter 3, 6th sentence (hereinafter referred to as Gen. 3,6): *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

Even though it may seem ridiculous to arrogant taunters (who are even to be found among believers - how one can sin just by eating an apple?), it was clear to the ancient Jews and those who can see beyond the symbolic language dating back five thousand years. God did not want the first people know the difference between good and evil. They were only to know good. However, they also wanted to know the

difference. They were just like those who are attracted by drugs today. Too many people take a first dose of drug followed by another and another until they are soon completely destroyed. It is logical that just as a habitual drinker of today burdens his offspring genetically, The first people left a genetic mark on their offspring by the knowledge of evil and its attractiveness. And that is just the moment when good human nature was corrupted. To put it in an old-fashioned manner, hereditary sin is a genetic gravitation towards evil. As Saint Paul puts it: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." (free quotation Romans 7, 18-23). By the way, gravity is an incredible force. It fires even light. Physicists know something about it.

Even a little baby has a hereditary sin. Even though there are excellent qualities, but the baby is also in the gravitational field of evil. The baby is subject to gravitation towards the evil. The first summary of the reflections could be the deduction that if God allows evil and suffering, He is either unrighteous and so does not exist (since God may only be what is absolutely righteous, as we will see later), or He has something incommensurably, indefinitely better in store, better than the most affectionate love on the Earth, better than any strong experience. Better than orgasm or drugs.

Therefore do not complain of suffering (I do not say that it is not necessary to fight suffering), **incomprehension, unrighteousness, lack of money, of your evil abilities. If you love, suffering will change you! My Lord, give me strength to be. It is better not to say a word than to flare up. I mainly flare up in my family. I take anything that my wife tells me as a personal insult. My feeling of a sufferer is growing.**

The Return from Egypt and Settling in Nazareth 2,19

¹⁹After Herod's death, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.' ²¹So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. ²²But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the region of Galilee. ²³There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: He will be called a Nazarene.

According to Luke, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth until there was a census there. Then they stayed at Bethlehem for less than two years while the census was going on and spent some time there even afterwards. Then they had to have some property and trade there so that they made a living while staying at Bethlehem. After the death of Herod when Joseph was making a decision on where to return, Bethlehem also appealed to him. They probably were not badly off there during the census. They probably lived in a good house (Mt 2,11), at least good enough for the living standards of the time in Bethlehem.

An ordinary Jewish family. The father a craftsman, possibly also having a strip of land, an industrious and thrifty man. The mother the same. Not wasting anything and even donated to those poorer than them, thus decreasing their moderate surplus. Jesus was probably born in a stable due to their arrival in Bethlehem at night in the period when Bethlehem was overflowing with people coming there for the census. Jerusalem was just a stone's throw from Bethlehem, which was definitely cheaper than Jerusalem. The place was then an ideal stop for travellers heading to Jerusalem. Crowds rushing to Bethlehem made the local population nervous, Joseph and Mary were probably not known to their local relatives in Bethlehem and when Mary's labour pains started, Joseph needed to act. Instead of proving his identity he got a warm corner of the stable, a midwife and arranged everything needed for a smooth labor. Afterwards the next day there was enough time to look for a proper home for his whole family.

A challenge: to imitate a cold-blooded decision, getting rid of useless emotions and illusions in ultimate situations. This is only what befits a man. Listening to the voice of God and following such a voice, even though it is difficult and incomprehensible, that is the lesson to learn from Joseph's decision to leave for Nazareth.

Chapter 3

John the Baptist, Declaration of Kingdom of God

3,1

*¹In due course John the Baptist appeared; he proclaimed this message in the desert of Judaea, ²'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.'
³This was the man spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said: A voice of one that cries in the desert, 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.'
⁴This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather loin-cloth round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then*

Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, ⁶and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.

⁷But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance, ⁹and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰Even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees, so that any tree failing to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. ¹¹I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who comes after me is more powerful than I, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

John the Baptist invites people to repent, to bring the fruits of their penance. He warns them about the arrival of the one who baptizes with fire and the Holy Spirit. The one to arrive will be very strict. His look or gestures will not, however, be strict. He will not fume with rage, nor will his nature be strict. What he will require will, on the other hand, be strict.

Not by using sanctions. I will sanction myself. The strictness of the new King (in a certain sense jealousy) consists in the fact that He does not mean to share a man with anything and anyone. He wants him as a whole and just for Himself. But without any pressure or compulsion. Freely and willingly. Consciously. Voluntarily. He will in return offer Himself as a sweet burden and a pleasant yoke. He will say that He and his Father will come to and stay with those who love Him. He will be offering His love. He cannot and may not do more. No offices, money, pleasures will be offered. He will claim that all those things cannot match His love in eternity (available to a believer on the Earth). He will just ask for one thing: make sure that in everything you do you always remember: I AM THE MASTER, YOUR LORD.

But this is what John the Baptist does not know yet. Having been advised so by the Holy Spirit he knows that the chaff will be burnt up with unquenchable fire. He knows that even though the short-term remorse of Pharisees and Sadducees helps to purge them for a while, but he also knows that their weakness persists and that they are not blameless. Therefore he accepts their penance, but at the same time advises them against insincere, short-term and fruitless conversion. **I am also warned. Even**

my grief will only last for a while. If there is no fruit of remorse, so it holds that the axe is already put to the trunk.

This is where I should for the first time stop and look back at what has already been written. My eyes were caught by sentence (Mt 1,21) - *he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.*

How can one be saved from one's sins?

At first a man needs to admit his sin. He who thinks that he is free from sin or that there exists no sin, shall not expect and will not live to see his liberation.

What is sin?

Sin is evil. What is evil - this will be explained on the page in chapter 5,10. So far, so much: Sin is a conscious and free disgrace (disrespect) of the dignity of the person. The person is every person from the moment of conception; and God. I do not mention angels, because I feel that nobody in principle opposes them. Probably because people think of their existence as a fiction. Another group of people considers them to be acting only according to the command of God and thus as if without personal freedom. It is a misconception, because angels are also persons and act completely freely. Some of them act freely and knowingly evil, that is, against God. Exactly against God's creation.

And what, then, is freedom?

Freedom according to a baby – is that I am doing what I want to do.

Let us illustrate this with an example. A happy family, father, mother, children. One of the spouses (it does not matter which one) meets a person of the opposite sex outside his or her family and, as ill luck would have it, they click. At first they take a liking to each other, there are smiles, short meetings, later they meet for longer and finally they fall for each other. The spouse (let us call him S) is at the crossroads. Is he to follow his love which appears outside marriage (“I am free and may do whatever I like!”), or is he to suppress his personal freedom feeling responsibility for his original family and to remain faithful to his lawful partner and family?

S resolves to follow the first option. His family is ruined and he faces problems. Division of property and children, hatred of the partner who remained faithful. There are problems with the children's upbringing. He is condemned by their joint friends and relatives. It is logical that the problems resulted from the free decision of S. He suffers from such a life, he did not want it. S did not freely violate marital fidelity. He was a slave to something objectively evil.

To avoid problems God wants, however, S to be faithful. God then wants S to freely decide for faithfulness, then the good. Even S desires the good. A broken

family is not, however, the good, but the evil. No one, however voluntarily desires the evil. Yet S achieved the evil, not the good.

Although S wanted to achieve good by his decision, his conduct objectively resulted in the evil that he did not want to cause. Let me emphasize that “the evil was objectively achieved”. S may subjectively feel the good. But as we learn from experience, many will sober up and will not even feel the subjective good.

Which freedom is more real and authentic? The one that I consequently perceive as something satisfactory at the end of the day or the one that I consequently perceive as suffering at the end of the day?

Let us pose a question which is even more detailed.

Is the freedom which results in peace, even though preceded by inner struggles, better than the freedom which requires no struggle with your will, but which ends up in chaos at the end of the day?

Axiomatic reply: Only the only freedom that is right is the one which makes a man permanently and unchangeably happy.

Why did we make this digression?

The term freedom will also be mentioned very often.

Jesus' Baptism

3,13

¹³Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. ¹⁴John tried to dissuade him, with the words, 'It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!' ¹⁵But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands.' Then John gave in to him.

¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptised he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. ¹⁷And suddenly there was a voice from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

Righteousness, according to the excerpt, includes a man's ability to humble himself and even do what he does not have to. Even God, the most righteous of all, accepts baptism to repent and declares that this is righteous. God represented by

Christ supported penance and was even repenting Himself. He was not, however, doing so of His sins, but of those of the world (i) and to show His self-improvement (ii).

God needs no self-improvement. Nor does Christ. Now we, people, however have no excuse. Not even the most righteous and perfect man may say: "I need do no penance." If Christ repented, anyone who wants / desires to bear the name human being must do so, too.

Chapter 4

4.1

Temptation in the Desert

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the desert to be put to the test by the devil. ²He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was hungry, ³and the tester came and said to him, 'If you are Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' ⁴But he replied, 'Scripture says: Human beings live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

⁵The devil then took him to the holy city and set him on the parapet of the Temple. ⁶'If you are Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: He has given his angels orders about you, and they will carry you in their arms in case you trip over a stone.' ⁷Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

⁸Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹And he said to him, 'I will give you all these, if you fall at my feet and do me homage.' ¹⁰Then Jesus replied, 'Away with you, Satan! For scripture says: The Lord your God is the one to whom you must do homage, him alone you must serve.'

¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels appeared and looked after him.

The Holy Spirit guided Jesus to the desert. The Third divine person led the Second divine person to test His resistance to temptation. That proves that Jesus, although He was God, was also a man all over. It would be completely illogical if God