

Mt. 13,1-23

Luckily, in central aspects the homily Jesus himself gave to his parable are today as valid as they were in his days: Greed and fear were and are strong influences on all who were listening to the word of God and try to implement it in their lives.

Given our situation today, however, I suggest to add one more aspect of interpretation: Given our pluralist structure of society, it is no longer obvious where the seeds of the Kingdom bring thirty- sixty and hundredfold fruit. To put it otherwise: In earlier times, it was understood without explanation, that the place to bring fruit was the church, and membership in the church secured somehow that fruit will be brought right and all others were somehow misguided in whatever they undertake. I am sure that this no longer a valid point of view.

For example: Lets take the LiveAid initiative of musicians all over the world, which brought one big concert also to Berlin last Saturday. The commitment of these people for more justice in this world, their engagement for the poorest of the poor is something which I without hesitation would label as 'truly christian'. But I wonder, how many of these musicians consider themselves to be bound by Christian or even church values. How many would argue that they acted out of some sort of humanitarian impetus or some insight into the necessity of solidarity within the human family. True, also church leaders took part in the event as such, but one cannot deny that the main initiators came from outside the church.

And yet: There remains a big task for the church! Because the LiveAid people tackled only a part of the problem: To put big demands to 8 single people in Gleneagles is at best symbolic, because the so called most powerful men of the world know of course that the visit of a concert does not mean that all those dancing and singing are really prepared to help Africa. Because if you talk about Africa, you have also to talk about our wealth in the rich countries, our trade regime, our economy, our lifestyle, our consumerism.

And I wonder, how many of those singing and dancing would be really prepared to share their wealth and their possession with the poor in Africa.

However: Only if this would happen, then the message to the political leader of the G8 would have been a serious one: That their population are ready to bring personal sacrifices in order to contribute partake in the efforts to make the world a better place!

It remains a task of the church to put across the complete message, to put in front of the people the real choices and to name the real responsibilities, possibilities and challenges which are facing us.

This is especially true after the renewed bomb attacks of islamistic terrorists. Nothing can justify bomb attacks. On the other hand: What justifies, that every 3 seconds somebody dies with hunger? It was Will Smith at the LiveAid concert in Philadelphia last week who reminded us by snapping his finger that this is the regular global death rate of starvation. If this is right, then about 1000 people will die in the time we will spend of celebrating our mass today.

Bombs and hunger are both scandals and both have to be addressed with equal rigour. Of course, terrorists are not coming from among the poor people in this world. Their background is mostly middle-class or better. But the misery in the world and the responsibility of the rich countries for these conditions provide them with ample justification for their acts. Without the broad support of people all over the world, who are desperate, disillusioned, without perspective, but who are united in their hatred against the rich western world, terrorism could be fought effectively and immediately.

War on terrorism cannot simply be fought with high tech equipment, biometrics and weapons. It is most importantly a battle for values, legitimacy and the hearts and minds of people.

It will remain the task of the church (and in this case of all true religious leaders) to strike the balance between causes and responses. To prevent simplistic solutions and to prevent fanatics and hypocrites to determine the course of events. The entire truth about the worlds situation today is complex and overall dire. But only if we try to face it as completely and comprehensively as possible we will achieve real progress towards human unity and the eradication of evil. Be it terror or hunger.